

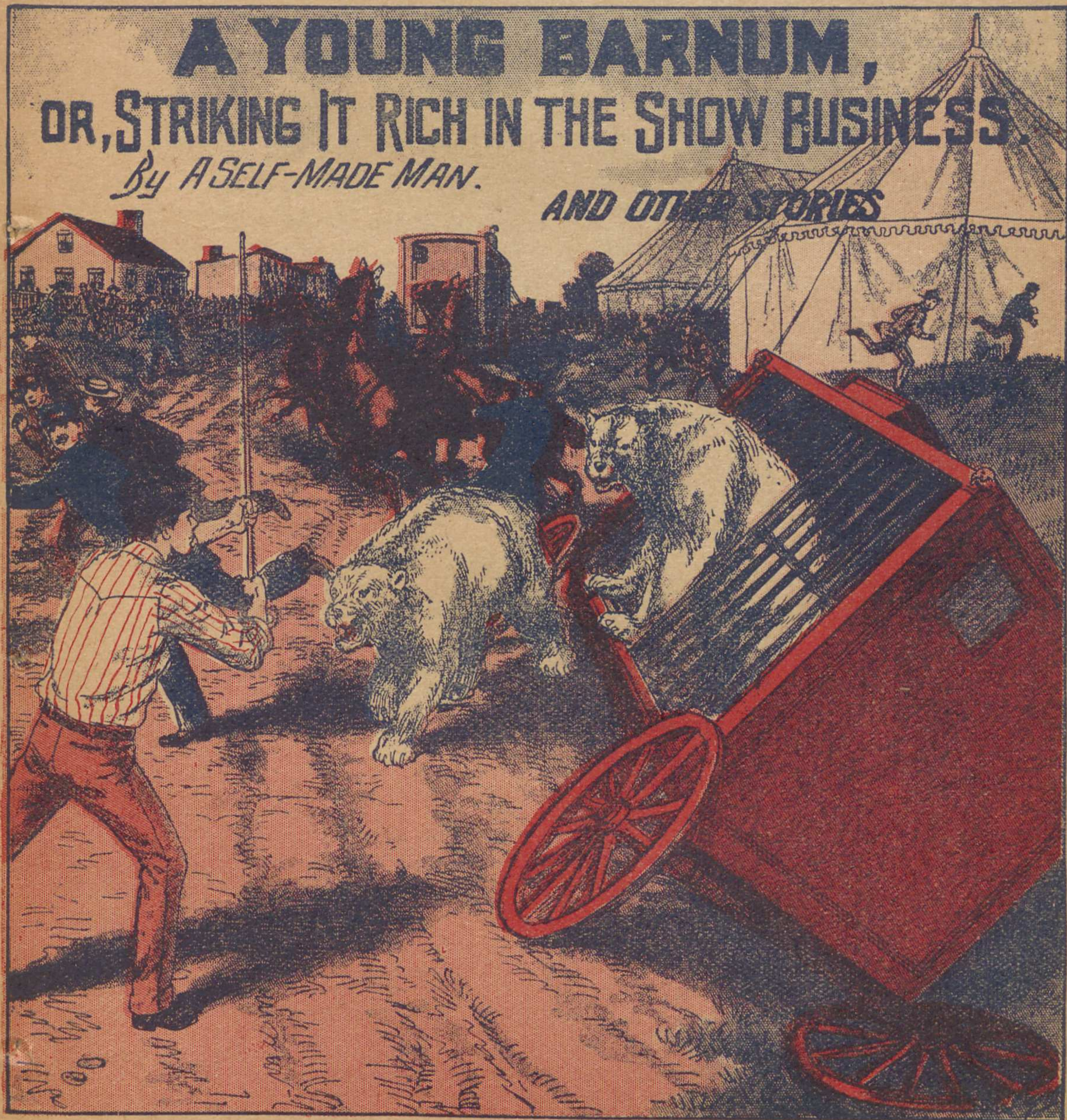
# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

**A YOUNG BARNUM,  
OR, STRIKING IT RICH IN THE SHOW BUSINESS.**

*By A SELF-MADE MAN.*

*AND OTHER STORIES*



Crash! went the wagon on its side. The heavy barred door, loosened from its fastenings by the shock, slid back and out leaped the two savage white bears. At that critical moment Joe, with the steel bar uplifted, dashed forward.

# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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## A YOUNG BARNUM

OR, STRIKING IT RICH IN THE SHOW BUSINESS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.—The Two Canvasmen.

"Discharged! And the circus starts out to-morrow. I'll have revenge, by the livin' jingo!" roared Mark Murdock, a burly, half-drunken canvasman, hoarsely, as he staggered out into the road through a side door of a big oblong building, which was the winter quarters of Newton's Great American Circus and Menagerie, situated on the outskirts of the town of Dover.

"I'd give somethin' to get even with old Newton, too, for I'm in the same boat as yourself," said Dan Hurley, another canvasman, and crony of Murdock's, as he followed the first speaker into the road, where the shadows of early evening were gathering thick and fast.

"That's the way to talk, Dan," said Murdock, slapping his companion on the back. "We'll get square with him for throwin' us over just as the season is beginnin'."

The speaker lurched around, shook his huge fist at the building, and muttered savage words half aloud.

"How are we goin' to do it, Mark?" asked Hurley, glancing cautiously around, but failing to notice a rather shabbily-dressed boy who had shrunk behind the thick trunk of a huge, gnarled, wide-spreading oak tree that faced the door on which was lettered the words "No Admittance."

"There's more ways than one of skinnin' a cat," replied Murdock, darkly.

"We might come here durin' the night, set fire to the buildin', and send the bloomin' show to blazes," suggested Hurley.

"I wish we could, but the place is too well watched. The old codger ain't takin' no chances with his valuable property."

"Then how can we do him? Somethin' ought to be done to-night afore the show takes the road."

"We'll do somethin' to-night."

"You've got somethin' on your mind, then?"

"I have. Did you ever know my think tank to be out of workin' order?"

"I'll allow you're a good schemer, Mark. Many a time——"

"Never mind about what's passed and gone. We're dealin' with the present now. I've a plan that I think'll work. If it does there's money as well as revenge in it."

"Money!"

"Aye, money! Ain't that what we need? I'm on my uppers, and I guess you ain't no better,

though you have a home and a wife a few miles from here where you can lay up at."

"A home! It ain't much to brag of to begin with, and in the second place it ain't mine—it belongs to the old woman."

"What's hers is yours, ain't it?"

"No, it ain't, and you know it. She says I'm a lush, and the only time she's happy is when the season's on, and I'm off with the show."

"You won't be off with the show this trip, 'cause you're fired, like me," said Murdock with a wicked grin.

"Yes, I'm fired good and plenty, and I don't know what I'm going to do for a livin' this summer," growled Hurley, placing his hand on the tree behind which the boy stood concealed.

"You stick to me, Dan, and you won't have no cause to worry. We've been pals since we joined the show, haven't we?"

"We have, but my old woman never took to you. She's warned me ag'in you fifty times or more."

"Then why don't you give me up? Why don't you, Dan?" chuckled Murdock.

"Because I don't see why I should," replied Dan.

"Of course you don't. I've been useful to you, haven't I? I've helped you out of many a scrape. You'd have been fired long ago if it wasn't for me promptin' you. Did you tell your old woman that?"

"I did. I told her you was a good friend to me in the business."

"And what did she say?"

"She said the day would come when I'd regret a millstone when there was a hole in it."

"What did she mean by that?" asked Murdock with another grim chuckle.

"She meant you was playin' me for a fool."

"Oh, she did, eh?"

"She said the day would come when I'd regret havin' had anything to do with you."

"Do you believe that?"

"No, I don't. Women don't know nothin'."

"Of course they don't. They're always findin' mare's nests in order to have somethin' to kick about. That was the way with my old woman; but I fixed her—yes, I fixed her for good."

"What did you do to her?" asked Hurley, curiously. "You never said much about her afore."

"No matter," answered Murdock, shortly, glancing around him with a kind of frightened shudder. "We won't talk about her, you understand?" he added, fiercely.

"All right. Don't get mad over it. I ain't pertic'larly curious."

Murdock put his hand to his hip pocket, drew out a pocket flask and drained the few remaining drops in it. Had Hurley been more observant he would have noticed that his companion's face was ghastly white, and that his hand shook a great deal. He wasn't a man who noticed things easily, which was a great pity, all things considered. He would have gone to the dogs long since but for the restraining influence of the unhappy woman who had married him under the impression that she was getting a protector and provider. Fortunate indeed was it for the poor woman that her father had left her in her own name a small home, humble as it was, which she refused to turn into cash to humor her worthless husband.

"Look here, Dan, are you with me in my plan?" cried Murdock, after tossing the empty flask on the ground and gripping his companion by the arm.

"What is it?"

"I want to know if you're with me before I say a word."

"I s'pose so," replied Hurley, a bit uneasily.

"You s'pose so. That won't do. If you're not with me you're ag'in me."

"Ag'in you, Mark? Ain't I your pal?"

"You say you are, but——"

"I am. Ain't I proved it by stickin' to you ag'in my old woman's wishes?"

"I ain't asked you to do anythin' till now. I'm goin' to have revenge on Newton to-night—to-night, d'ye understand? If you're ready to help me, say so. If you ain't got the pluck, why go your way. We part here for good."

If, as the good Book says, each one of us has a guardian angel who stands visible at our elbow to try and guide us sinful mortals in the right path, how this spiritual being must have hung on Hurley's answer, laying its impalpable hand on his shoulder and pointing off in the direction of the cottage where his wife was at that moment cooking supper for two. Fate at that moment was pregnant for good or evil in the career of the canvasman. Here was his chance to cut loose from an evil associate and escape the penalties that bristled where that man led. Mark Murdock, however, knew his pal. Knew him for a blind fool, whom he could wind around his finger at will. Even as he offered him his choice, he felt there was a string to it as strong as a hempen cable. And he was right.

"Do you mean to shake me, Mark?" asked Hurley. "And me out of a job."

"Not if you're ready to stick by me. But I will have no half measures. If we are to continue pals you must pull with me. A while ago you said you'd give somethin' to get even with Newton. Are you still of the same mind?"

"Yes," replied Hurley, but there was a ring of indecision in his tone which did not escape his companion's sharp ears.

Murdock grinned wickedly, and the look he bent on Hurley was not particularly friendly.

"You didn't say that as if you meant it. Your blood has turned cold since you got the kick out. You've half a mind to let things slide, and like a whipped dog slink over to your house. Don't tell me you ain't, for I can see it in your manner. And s'pose you go home, what'll your wife say

when you tell her you've lost your job? Will she be willin' to keep you around all summer as she has all winter? Or will you have to put up with her jawin' every time you show your face to her? Are you a man or a mouse, Dan Hurley? Answer me that," said Murdock, cuttingly.

"I'm a man, of course," replied Hurley, sulkily.

"Oh, you are? Then show it. I want a fellow with some grit, who won't shy at his shadow in the moonlight. Join me in my plan and you'll have more money to spend than you ever had afore in your life. You'll be able to walk into your house with your head up and lord it over your old woman by plankin' down a wad that'll make her head swim. Then she'll respect you. A woman always takes off her hat to the boss of the roost when he's got the mazuma. Instead of ratin' you for a lush, and wishin' you on the road, she'll be as soft as dough, and her jawin'-tackle will be oiled up with honey. Oh, I know 'em. They can be as nice as pie when it suits them to be so."

"What's your plan?"

"Are you with me?"

"Yes."

The die was cast. Hurley had let a golden chance slip away from him. He had entered into a compact with a man who despised him, and yet wished to turn his services to account.

## CHAPTER II.—Revenge and Money.

The boy, who had been an attentive listener to the conversation of the two canvasmen, hugged the tree still closer in the darkness, and listened more eagerly than ever, for he now expected the chief rascal to divulge the scheme he had in mind for getting square with Mr. Newton, the proprietor of the circus. He was a poor boy, out of work, and out of money, who had walked many weary miles that day to reach Dover before dark if he could. His name was Joe Melville, and he was an orphan, without home or friends. Luck had been against him for a long time, but a gypsy woman he met along the road two days before had looked at his hand and told him, among other things, that his luck would change when he reached Dover, and that he would strike the tide that would lead on to fortune.

As she had told him many truths concerning his past, he was inclined to put some faith in her words. At any rate he felt encouraged, and continued on his way with fresh hope. He was passing the circus buildings about dusk when the two men came out in a very bad humor, and the first words they uttered were so significant of trouble that he retired behind the tree to let them pass. They did not pass on, however, and therefore he heard all they said up to the moment that Hurley consented to take a hand in some dark plot against the owner of the Great American Circus.

Matters had now gone so far that Joe felt it was his duty to learn all he could about the scheme the chief rascal had in view, so that he could warn Mr. Newton and save him from falling into the trap. That this was likely to prove advantageous to himself he did not at the moment consider. When Dan Hurley uttered "Yes," a sardonic grin wreathed the ugly mouth of Mark

Murdock. He had expected his companion would come in on the project, but not without persuasion. He needed a pal on the job, and Dan was the only person he could trust. He felt as much satisfaction in bringing his associate around to his views as Old Nick is presumed to feel at the fall of a soul from righteousness. He was a wicked ruffian himself, and it was his object to make Hurley a bird of kindred feather. He knew that whatever were Dan's shortcomings he would never go back on a pal, but he felt no such scruples himself. He would feel no compunctions about sacrificing Hurley if at any time his interests would be benefited by doing so. In that respect he was just as slippery and treacherous as the Old One himself.

"Shake," he said to Hurley, and the two men clasped hands. "Now, I'll trust you. The plan I have in view is this: Newton, you know, lives out in your neighborhood. He lives with an old maid sister and his daughter, who is bein' trained for an equestrian act in the ring. Some time this season he's goin' to bring her out, under some high-falutin' French name, as a foreign artist he's engaged at an enormous salary. He's a foxy old rooster, Newton is."

"She's a handsome gal—Jessie Newton, and as light and graceful on a horse as any mam'selle in the business," said Hurley. "She's learnin' the ropes fast, but her old man won't bill her till Matthews, the equestrian director, says she's perfect. Her stunt is no common par act, but the real bareback business, with somersaults over banners and through hoops, with a few extra thrills thrown in as a whirlwind finish. I saw her practicin', and if she isn't the headliner of this show before the season's half over I'm out of my reckonin'."

"Maybe so, but there's many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"That's right she might meet with some accident afore the show started which would spoil her chances for all time," said Murdock, significantly.

"Not much chance of that, for the show opens in town to-morrow night—a sort of grand dress rehearsal—and starts for Louisville immediately afterward."

"A whole lot can happen between this time and to-morrow night, particularly if you and me help the good work along."

"What do you mean? You ain't thinkin' of injurin' that gal, are you?" cried Hurley, in a startled tone. "If you are I'm out of it. I ain't got nothin' ag'in her. She didn't have no hand in my discharge. She's a good little gal, and a chap who would try to harm her ought to be tarred and feathered," concluded the canvasman, with some energy.

Murdock glared savagely at his companion.

"Look here, Dan Hurley, are you tryin' to back out after passin' your word?"

"Back out! Of course not, but that gal ain't in the scheme, so what's the use of bringin' her up?"

"My scheme is revenge and money—revenge to satisfy the score I have ag'in Newton, and money to set us up for the season. If I could see my way to puttin' the show out of business I'd be satisfied with that; but I can't. We ain't got no dynamite bombs that we could plant ag'in the buildin' to-night and blow 'em to pieces; and it's too risky to try and set 'em afire. Under them

circumstances we've got to try some other plan. I don't say that I've got anythin' ag'in Jessie Newton, but I know she's the apple of the old man's eye. If anythin' was to happen to her he'd go rip starin' mad, then the show would go to blazes anyway. Now it's my idea that somethin' shall happen to her to-night, see? One of them misfortunes that nobody expects and consequently can't guard ag'in."

"No, no, Mark Murdock, she mustn't be harmed, I tell you," cried Hurley, with feverish earnestness. "She must be left out of your plan or I'll have nothin' to do with it."

"What's she to you?" asked Murdock, fiercely.

"She's nothin' to me, but——"

"You soft-hearted slob, you're stuck on her, too, like the rest of the bunch," snarled Murdock.

"Do you s'pose she'd notice a common canvasman like you? I've sized her up. She's got no use for anybody in the show except to have 'em admire her, and run errands for her. Why she struck Ben Day the other mornin' in the face with her whip 'cause he accidentally made her horse shy while she was practicin', and she had to jump off to save herself."

"He didn't say nothin' to me about it," said Hurley.

"Of course he didn't. And you wouldn't either if she broke your jaw. You make me sick with your blamed squeamishness. 'Cause she's Newton's daughter, and has a handsome face, you and the rest of the chaps think she's an angel. Well, you don't know her. If you did you wouldn't care what happened to her."

"I don't care whether I know her or not, I won't raise my hand ag'in no woman," said Hurley, doggedly. "I'm ready to take a hand ag'in Newton. We were fired by his orders. Cut the gal out and we'll talk business."

Murdock shot a look of malice at his companion. For a moment it looked to the unseen watcher behind the tree as if the rascal meant to attack his pal. Then Murdock uttered a wicked laugh.

"Oh, well, since you object to my plan we'll say no more about it. We'll pass up the revenge and tackle the money end."

"How do you expect to get this money you speak about?" asked Hurley, showing some interest.

"I happen to know that Newton received a big sum of cash from the bank to-day, and that he carried it out to his house."

"You know that, do you?"

"Yes. He ain't got no safe there, so it oughtn't to be so difficult for you and me to pay the house a visit some time after midnight and get away with it."

"I ain't a burglar, neither are you. We're sure to bungle the job, and then we'll go to prison, which wouldn't suit me at all."

"No danger of anythin' happenin' to us. I've been out to the house several times doin' odd jobs for Newton, and I've got the lay of the place down fine. One of the cellar window gratin's is broken, and we can get in that way without anyone bein' the wiser. I heard Newton tell Matthews that he was goin' to his lodge to-night, and didn't expect to get home afore two in the mornin', so we'll have a couple of hours in which to do the trick."

Hurley seemed to be doubtful about the job,

which was new to him. He felt sorry he had agreed to stand in with Murdock, and would have drawn out if he had possessed the courage to do so. His wavering attitude made the other canvasman mad, and he berated him for his indecision. Finally Hurley agreed to stand by his companion.

"Now you're talkin'," said Murdock. "After we divide the swag we'll have money to burn, and we can lay off like gents all summer and enjoy ourselves. No one will ever suspect where we got the cash. Come on, we'll go to supper. I'll stand treat."

As they started off, Joe moved around the trunk to keep the tree between him and the rascals. In doing so he stepped on a round stone, which rolled under his weight and caused him to fall with some noise. Murdock looked sharply around and, seeing the boy's shadow, uttered an imprecation and, dashing at the tree, seized Joe by the collar and yanked him up.

### CHAPTER III.—The Dry Well.

"Who in thunder are you?" roared Murdock, fiercely.

"Nobody in particular," replied Joe, finding that he could not shake off his captor's grip.

Murdock peered into the boy's face, but did not recognize him as one he had seen before.

"What are you doin' behind that tree?" he demanded.

"Just standing there," answered Joe.

"How long have you been standin' there?"

"I didn't keep count of the time."

"You've been listenin' to our talk, and you intend to give us away. Come here Hurley. I've caught a spy."

"A spy!" cried the other canvasman.

"Yes, a spy. He's been hid behind that tree all the time we were talkin'."

"Then he's heard——"

"Everythin'. Strike a match and let me get a look at his face."

Hurley was not a little rattled at the idea of their conversation being known to a third person.

He lit a match and held it toward the boy with shaking fingers, holding his soft hat in front of his face. Hurley, who made no effort to conceal his own features, which were coarse, red and covered with a stubby beard, while his eyes were bloodshot from drink, glared viciously at Joe.

"You belong in town, eh?" he said.

"No; I'm a stranger. Only reached this place to-night."

Joe's appearance, dusty and travel-stained, sustained his statement, and the burly canvasman believed him.

"Did you see us come out of that buildin'?" demanded Murdock.

"I did," replied Joe.

"That was half an hour ago, and you've been hangin' 'round ever since. What did you do it for?"

Joe made no answer.

"You've been spyin' on us, haven't you?" said Murdock, fiercely.

The boy maintained a dogged silence.

"I say you've been spyin' on us," cried the

man, shaking him roughly. "You've listened to all we said."

"I won't deny it," replied Joe, realizing that facts spoke for themselves.

"You hear that, Hurley?"

"Yes," growled that individual.

"He knows what we're going to do tonight, and that means the end of the job, unless——"

"Unless what?" asked Hurley.

"We silence him."

"How can we?"

"By chokin' the life out of him," replied Murdock, with a hiss.

"No, no; we mustn't murder him," objected Hurley.

"Why not? He's got us in his power. If we let him go the first thing he'll do will be to go to the police and tell what he's heard. He knows we've just been fired from the circus, and the police will have no trouble in identifying us. We'll be searched for and arrested, and then it'll be all up with us."

At that moment a light wagon came driving down the road from town.

"Here, grab him. We must carry him along to that bunch of bushes till the wagon gets by," continued Murdock.

He clapped his huge hand over Joe's mouth and began to drag him away. Hurley picked up the boy's legs, and they bore him to the bushes referred to and sank down behind it, forcing the lad in among the leaves and stems. The wagon, instead of driving by, stopped in front of the door marked "No Admittance."

The driver jumped down, ran to the door and hammered on it. In a few minutes it was opened by somebody on the inside. The driver said something and the doorkeeper threw the door open. Both then went to the wagon, lifted out a long, thin bag containing some circus property, and carried it into the building. A sudden idea struck Murdock.

"That wagon will be just the thing to carry this chap off in. I know how we'll fix him so that he can't peach on us. Lift him up and fetch him along," he said.

"The driver will catch us," said Hurley.

"Don't you worry about the driver. Do as I say."

They carried Joe to the wagon.

"Get in," said Murdock to his companion.

Hurley obeyed him.

"Now haul this chap up, and if he lets a whimper out of him, choke him off."

The speaker pushed the boy up to his pal.

"Throw him on his back and sit on him," said the big canvasman.

Hurley carried out his instruction as Murdock sprang up on the seat and, grabbing the reins, started the horse up the road toward the open country beyond the town. The vehicle and its occupants disappeared in the gloom before the driver returned to find his rig missing.

"See if the boy has a handkerchief," said Murdock, half turning on his seat. "Tie it around his mouth. Then turn him over and tie his hands with that piece of rope."

Joe refused to submit to this treatment without making an effort to escape from Hurley, but the canvasman was a great deal heavier and stronger than he, and having the advantage of

being on top, the boy found that his struggles availed him nothing, and in a few minutes he was gagged and bound, with Hurley sitting astride of his back. The wagon proceeded at a smart pace.

"Where are you going, Mark?" asked his pal.

"Out to your place."

"My place!"

"Yes. There's a dry well close to your barn. We'll drop him into it. That will save us the trouble of puttin' him out of the way and hurtin' your tender feelin's," said Murdock, sneeringly.

"But we can't leave him there. He'd starve to death."

"We'll put him out after we've put our job through," said the other, who, however, had no intention of doing such a thing.

He meant that the well should be Joe's grave, but felt obliged to temporize with his companion for the present. They passed in sight of the lights of a handsome residence, owned and occupied by William Newton, the proprietor of the circus. A mile and a half further on was the unpretentious cottage where Hurley and his wife lived. Mrs. Hurley had cooked supper, eaten her own, and had her husband's warming on the stove. She never waited more than a reasonable time for him, as he was rather irregular in attendance at his meals, often not showing up at all. For fear of attracting Mrs. Hurley's attention Murdock stopped the wagon a few yards from the gate of the lane which connected with the yard at the back of the house. He and Hurley then pulled Joe out of the vehicle and carried him up the lane between them. They skirted the yard and reached the dry well which was covered with loose boards.

"You've got a rope in the barn, haven't you?" asked Murdock.

"Yes," replied Hurley.

"Get it, then, and we'll lower him down. I know you'd object to droppin' him in for fear he'd break his precious neck," said Murdock, with a wicked chuckle.

Hurley got the rope. Murdock tied it securely around Joe's body under his arms. The men then removed the boards that covered the mouth of the well and lowered the boy down into the dry and long disused circular hole. When the rope slackened Hurley tied the end of it around one of the planks that he replaced in position. Murdock watched him with a wicked look.

"Now we'll be off," he said. "After we've our haul at Newton's we'll come back and pull him out. Then we'll have to skip, so we might as well run the horse and wagon into the lane and let the rig stand there till we come back."

"Where will I meet you? I'm goin' in to supper," said Hurley.

"You'll not meet me anywhere. You'll stay right with me. If you go in the house you've got to take me."

"My old woman won't stand for you."

"Then we'll go back to town and eat."

"I don't see any need of me goin' back when my supper is ready for me."

"I can't trust you in the house without me. You're liable to say somethin' that'll raise a suspicion in your wife's mind. Besides, she's likely to object to you goin' out ag'in to-night. She'll want to know where you're goin' and why you're goin'. I know what the women are. We'll walk

back to town and eat. That reminds me we shall want a large chisel. Got one in the barn?"

"Yes."

"Go get it."

The moment Hurley entered the barn, Murdock, with a wicked chuckle, slipped over to the dry well, untied the end of the rope and let it down on the boy's head.

"There," he muttered. "He's fixed for good. He can't yell out, and Mrs. Hurley will never suspect there is anything down there. In a couple of days he'll be out of his misery and we'll be safe from all suspicion."

He returned to the spot he left just as Hurley came out of the barn with the chisel in his hand.

#### CHAPTER IV.—Rescue.

Joe's feelings when he was lowered into the dry well may be better imagined than described. Bound and gagged as he was, his lower limbs only being at liberty, he could do nothing to help himself. The well was faced with cement laid over brickwork. It was fully thirty feet deep, and even if he had had the use of his mouth he doubted if any cry he could utter would be heard by Mrs. Hurley at the house. He judged that she was a good, honest woman, who was cursed with a scamp for a husband, and he pitied her from his heart. He also pitied himself under the circumstances. From the conversation of the men he judged it was their intention to release him after they had robbed the house of the circus proprietor. That was some comfort, to be sure, though he knew he would have to remain in the well many hours, but it was a sore reflection for him to feel that after discovering the plot it was now out of his power to frustrate it. Suddenly a more alarming possibility occurred to him. Suppose the rascals were discovered at their nefarious work and chased away, would they not be afraid to return to the neighborhood lest they be arrested? In that event they would abandon him to his fate, and he would probably die by slow degrees at the bottom of the well.

This disquieting thought gave him the shivers. But a worse shock was in store for him. He heard a slight sound at the top of the well. Then the hissing voice of Murdock was projected down to him.

"D'ye think I meant to let you out of this well, you spy? Not on your life. I had to pretend to agree to it to satisfy that soft-hearted pal of mine. When we get through the job I'll see to it that he doesn't come back here to let you out. We wouldn't be safe a moment if we did. I'm no fool if my pal is. So stay there and rot. That's what you get for buttin' in where you had no business."

As the last word was uttered by the scoundrel above, down came the thirty odd feet of rope on Joe's head, falling all about him. The boy was fairly staggered by the cool malignancy of the villainous canvasman, and the dropping of the rope seemed like the knell of doom.

"I'm afraid I'm done for," he groaned. "And this is the end of all my hopes. That gypsy woman deceived me. Why didn't she warn me of this peril if she could prophesy the future as well as the past? She might have told me what I

would be up against, and I'd have taken precautions. She told me that my luck would change for the better after I struck Dover. That I would strike the path to fortune and happiness. It looks like it. I've struck the road to the grave, more like."

To die there in that dry well, gagged and bound like some wild animal, made him desperate. He tore at his bonds, chafing the skin off his wrists. He felt almost like knocking his head against the hard sides of his prison and trying to end his misery then and there. Suddenly the rope loosened, and he drew his hands from behind his back. Then he tore the handkerchief from his mouth. That of itself afforded him considerable relief. Exhausted by his efforts, and terribly discouraged, he sat down and leaned his back against the well. How long he remained that way he never knew, but happening to look up he saw a dim flash of light at the top of the well. It looked as if a lantern was standing on the boards and the light shone in a feeble way through the cracks.

"Help! Help! Help!" shouted Joe, with all the power of his lungs.

He heard a startled exclamation, seemingly from a woman.

"Help! I'm in the well," cried Joe.

"My gracious!" came back a woman's voice. "It can't be possible there is somebody down in this well. It isn't natural. Who's there?"

"A boy."

"A boy!" cried the woman. "And you are down in this well?"

"Yes. Get help and have me pulled out."

"My goodness! How did you get down there? Did you fall in somehow? I don't see how you could, for the boards were over the top. Are you hurt?"

"I didn't fall in, and I'm not hurt. I'll tell you how I got here after I get out," replied Joe, feeling now assured of escaping from his terrible situation.

"Can you climb up if I lower a rope to you?"

"Yes, ma'am, if you make it secure on top."

"Wait, then, till I return. There's a rope in the barn."

She went away to get it. Joe was afraid that the rope she expected to get was the one which had been used to lower him down.

If such proved to be the case he'd have to wait until she went to some neighbor for help. Before she got back he thought of another way out of the difficulty. At length he heard her voice again.

"I can't find the rope anywhere," she said. "My husband must have taken it away for some purpose. You'll have to wait till I can——"

"Have you got a ball of stout twine in the house, ma'am?" asked Joe.

"I have. What good will that do?"

"I guess the rope you were looking for is down with me."

"Down with you!" she cried, in astonishment.

"Yes, ma'am. If you'll go and get the twine and lower it down to me, I'll tie the end of the rope to it and you can haul it up and make it fast. Then I'll be able to climb out."

Mrs. Hurley, for she was the person who had heard Joe's cry for help, could not understand how the rope came to be down in the well; but she wasted no time considering the matter, for

she realized that the boy's rescue was a matter of more importance than the rope.

"I'll run and get the twine," he said.

She was away about fifteen minutes, which seemed an endless interval to the impatient lad.

He heard her voice again with much satisfaction.

"I've got the twine. I'll tie the end to a small stone and send it down," she said.

"All right, ma'am," responded Joe.

Presently he saw her leaning over the mouth of the well, and her actions indicated that she was letting the twine down. The stone clicked two or three times against the side of the well, each time nearer to him than before. It was so dark down where he was that he couldn't see the stone, but by swinging his arms around he finally came in contact with the twine.

"That's far enough, ma'am," he said, and she stopped lowering it any further.

"Be sure and tie it tight," she shouted down.

"Yes, ma'am. I'll see that it won't come loose. All right—haul away."

Mrs. Hurley pulled up the twine and the rope went with it. Presently she caught the end in her hand and looked around for something substantial to tie it to. There was nothing that struck her as suitable, so she told him she was going to the barn to get a thick pole that was there. She brought the pole back with her, tied the rope securely around its middle and then told Joe to climb away. It was no great feat for Joe to climb a thirty-foot rope, for he was strong and as active as a monkey. Mrs. Hurley flashed the lantern down into the well, and in a short time his figure came within the glow cast by its rays. Higher and higher climbed the boy until his hands came within reach of the pole, when he grasped it.

"You see the rope is tied around under my arms, ma'am. Pull up the slack and then you'll be able to support me while I try to scramble out," said Joe.

Mrs. Hurley did as he asked her to and in a few minutes our hero was out of the dry well, with the glorious star-lit sky above and around him, and the light night breeze fanning his cheeks.

## CHAPTER V.—Joe and the Canvasman's Wife.

"Thank you, ma'am. You are Mrs. Hurley, I suppose? I am very grateful to you, for you've surely saved my life," said Joe, feeling more thankful than he could express.

"You're welcome, young man," replied the woman, who was dressed in a cheap calico gown, and wore a cloth sun-bonnet on her head. "Now I'll be glad to know how you got down in that well. I don't see how you could have fallen into it and left the boards lying on top of it. But I think you said you didn't fall in. Indeed, if you had it would have been a miracle if you didn't break your neck."

"Wait a minute, ma'am, till I remove the pole and replace the boards as they were. Then you may unknot the rope around my body, and I will tell you a story that will not only surprise you, but, I regret to say, cause you much pain."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Shall I take this pole back to the barn?" asked Joe.

"It doesn't matter, but you may do so if you wish."

Joe carried the pole back and Mrs. Hurley followed him with the lantern, very curious to learn what the boy had to tell.

After some trouble she unknotted the rope, and then Joe said:

"You have a husband, ma'am?"

"I have, but he's no credit to me or himself," she replied.

"I am a stranger in this neighborhood, but I have already learned that fact."

"You have met him, then?"

"I am sorry to say I have; but still I'll admit he's not as hard a case as the scoundrel he was with, and who seems to exercise considerable control over him."

"I know who you mean—Mark Murdock."

"I didn't hear his last name, but I know your husband called him Mark."

"That's the man. My husband was bad enough before he took up with that man, but I'm afraid he's on the road to ruin now. I've tried to reason with him, and show him that association with that man will surely lead him into trouble. Dan will not listen to me, so he must take the consequences of his folly."

Mrs. Hurley seemed to be an intelligent woman, and superior in every way to her worthless husband.

"Your husband and Mark Murdock have been in the employ of the circus?"

"They are connected with the circus as canvasmen."

"They were discharged this evening."

"My husband discharged, just as the season is opening?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"For what reason?"

"I couldn't tell you. I heard them say that they were discharged by Mr. Newton's orders."

This was decidedly unpleasant news for the woman, for she was always glad when her husband went on the road. It relieved her of his presence for a matter of six months, as well as the expense of keeping him; besides, she received a greater part of his pay at the close of the season from the treasurer of the circus, as it was the custom of the management to keep back the bulk of salaries until the show reached the end of its route, when everybody was paid off in full.

Mrs. Hurley's face took on a troubled look. She was not greatly surprised, because she had been fearing that her husband would get the hook on account of his intemperate habits.

"That's not the worst I have to tell you, ma'am," went on Joe.

"What else have you to tell? Has he been arrested?"

"No, ma'am, but he surely will be before morning."

"What has he done?" she asked nervously.

"It isn't so much what he has done as what he's going to do."

"Explain yourself," she said anxiously.

"I will. To begin with, you want to know how I came to be in that dry well. Mark Murdock and your husband put me down there."

"They did!" she cried in surprise.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Why did they do that and when?"

"They put me down there an hour or more ago—about eight o'clock, I should think."

"It's going on eleven now."

"Then I haven't any time to lose. I must reach Mr. Newton's house before midnight. It's somewhere in this locality."

"About a mile and a half along the road toward town," and Mrs. Hurley waved her arm in the direction the place lay.

"Your husband and Murdock put me down there to get me out of the way."

"Get you out of the way?"

"Yes. I overheard their plans to rob Mr. Newton's house to-night, and they caught me listening."

"Oh, heaven! Has my husband got down to that!" cried Mrs. Hurley in a tone of great distress.

"Murdock talked him into the scheme. He was angry because he was discharged, but if it hadn't been for that other big scoundrel I don't think he'd thought of such an enterprise. Murdock thought of the crooked plan, and as he wanted somebody he could trust to help him work it, he made your husband go into it."

"I knew it. I knew Murdock would ruin Dan," she cried, with clasped hands.

"Murdock is a thoroughly bad man. He intended that I should never get out of that well alive. I believe your husband meant to pull me out after the two had pulled off the robbery, but I dare say Murdock would not have let him come back here to do it. Why, that villain wanted your husband to help him injure Miss Newton, the circus proprietor's daughter, in some way to-night; but Hurley objected so strenuously that Murdock had to give it up."

"The villain!" exclaimed the woman.

"Now, ma'am, you know the facts in a general way. It is too late for me to go back to town to notify the police about the designs Murdock has on Mr. Newton's house. The only thing I can do is to go to the house and try to scare them off. Mr. Newton, I understand, is at his lodge to-night, and won't return home till around two o'clock. That will leave only the women in the house at the hour Murdock and your husband intend to break in. They expect to find quite a sum of money which Murdock told Hurley the circus man carried home from the bank this afternoon."

"Do you mean to go there alone?"

"I suppose I'll have to."

"I will go with you and stop Dan from entering the house."

"I'm afraid Murdock will handle you roughly if you interfere with them."

"I care not. Dan must be saved from the commission of a crime."

"Well, ma'am, I'll try and protect you. I wish I had a weapon of some kind."

"I have a revolver which I will loan you."

"Thank you, ma'am. I'll be glad to borrow it. It wouldn't be good for me to run against Murdock again unless I was able to protect myself."

"Follow me to the house."

Joe did so and Mrs. Hurley brought him the revolver. She locked up the cottage and they proceeded down the lane together. Before they

had gone far they saw the horse and wagon the two rascals ran off with in order to bring Joe to the cottage.

"Where did this come from?" she added.

Joe explained, and then said:

"We'll take the liberty of using it, ma'am. It will save us walking a mile and a half."

He helped Mrs. Hurley up on the seat, jumped up himself and started the horse. In a minute or two they were out of the lane on the road toward town. During the ride to Mr. Newton's house Joe told Mrs. Hurley all the details of conversation he had overheard between Murdock and her husband outside the circus winter quarters.

"Ah, if I could only get Dan to break with that rascal I might be able to persuade Mr. Newton to take him back on probation," said Mrs. Hurley. "Mr. Newton is a good-hearted gentleman, but he insists on rigid discipline over his employees. I can't blame him, for he has a lot of money invested in his business, and it costs a great deal of money to run a circus."

"Do you know Miss Newton?"

"I do, and a lovely girl she is. I believe Dan would have been discharged before if it hadn't been for her. She has shown me many a kindness which I never can forget. Her father is having her trained for the ring, though not without reluctance, I believe; but she seems to be fascinated with life in the ring, and Dan says she has extraordinary ability in that line, and will make a star bareback rider."

They now came in sight of the Newton home, which Mrs. Hurley pointed out to Joe.

It was a substantial, modern building, sitting back from the road in the midst of an extensive lawn. The inmates had evidently retired to rest, for there wasn't a light to be seen in any of the windows.

"We'd better stop here and hitch the horse," said Joe, "for we need to approach the house with some caution. It is close to midnight, and the men may be already reconnoitering the premises."

They left the rig tied to the fence under the shadow of a huge elm tree, and started forward on foot.

Entering the grounds they advanced toward the house. Silence reigned all around and there was no sign of other intruders than themselves.

"They haven't got here yet," said Joe.

But he was wrong, for at that moment a female shriek rang out in the house, and was repeated several times.

## CHAPTER VI.—Joe Saves Jessie Newton.

"My gracious!" cried Joe, "I believe they're inside after all."

Leaving Mrs. Hurley standing near the front porch he ran around the house to see if he could discover how the men had got in. His attention was attracted to the grating of one of the cellar windows. It had been wrenched off and lay on the ground beside the open sash. This was evidently the way the men had got in, and taken in connection with the shrieks left no doubt in the boy's mind of their presence in the house. Joe decided not to wait for them to come out with their booty, but to go in and tackle them. The

cries of the girl, whom he believed to be Jessie Newton, and the fact that he had a revolver, nerved the boy to the rather unequal task of facing two husky rascals, either of whom was physically able to do him up. Murdock was the man he really feared, for the fellow had shown a brutal indifference to human life that boded ill for the person who tried to corner him.

Joe worked himself backward through the window and dropped into the cellar. It was pretty dark there and he was forced to move around slowly and with caution in order to avoid obstacles while looking for the stairs that led up into the ground floor of the house. He found the stairs in a few moments and rushed up, landing in a small entry between the kitchen and the dining-room. Opening the nearest door he found himself looking into the main hall. It was dimly lighted by a Moorish lamp, swinging from four long bronze chains in front of the hall door.

The thick carpet gave out no sound as Joe ran along it toward the stairway communicating with the second floor. The stair carpet also deadened his light footfall as he dashed up. At that moment two figures clad in white came floundering down the next flight, in a state of great terror. They were the cook and the house-maid, who slept on the attic floor, but the boy had no idea of their identity. As Joe stepped forward to speak to them, they uttered a shriek apiece, and, eluding him, kept on down. As neither of them looked young enough to be Miss Newton, Joe let them go on and turned toward one of the doors on the landing. As he laid his hand on the nearest knob the door was opened in his face and a man came out with a bag loaded with something over his shoulder.

He butted into Joe and then uttered an exclamation. There was a lamp burning in the room he was leaving, and the rays fell on the boy's face. The light revealed the man's identity to Joe as Dan Hurley. Hurley recognized him with an ejaculation of astonished consternation and started back.

"Throw up your hands, you rascal!" cried Joe, shoving the muzzle of the revolver in his face.

"Oh, lord!" cried Hurley, clearly staggered by the sight of the weapon.

"Drop that bundle and surrender!" exclaimed Joe, again.

Hurley let it fall and stepped back.

"How did you get out of that well?" he asked.

"Your wife helped me out, and she's down on the lawn now waiting to take you home. If you promise to go with her I'll let you off."

"I promise," replied Hurley.

"Where is Murdock?"

"Upstairs, cleanin' out the rooms there."

"Did you find that money Murdock came here for?"

"He found it."

"Has he got it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you sneak home with your wife, and perhaps you'll not be arrested for this job. I'm giving you this chance for your wife's sake, because Murdock induced you to go into it. If I was you I'd leave the neighborhood for a while until the matter blows over. Murdock will have to take the consequences."

Joe stepped aside and pointed to the stairs.

Hurley, glad to make his escape, took the hint and flew down the flight. At that moment Joe smelled smoke. It seemed to come from the next floor. He started up the flight to find out what it meant. As he stepped on the landing a door opened and he saw a glare of fire behind the burly form of Murdock, who filled the opening.

"Good heavens!" breathed Joe. "The rascal must have set the room afire, intending to destroy the house."

He had no time for another thought, as he was face to face with the arch rascal himself. The gleam of the fire showed each to the other, and Murdock uttered a terrible imprecation when he recognized the boy.

"You! Escaped!" he cried.

"Yes, and your finish is at hand."

The ruffian laughed sardonically.

"Say, your own, young fellow. You have come in time to go up with the house."

"You've set the place on fire, have you? Oh, you villain! You'll pay dearly for seeking revenge on Mr. Newton."

"Will I? It's you who'll pay dearly for tryin' to queer my plans." He made a rush for Joe.

The boy sprang aside and covered him with the revolver.

"Give up or I'll shoot you down like a dog, you incendiary and robber," he said.

Murdock was taken aback when he saw the weapon pointed at his breast. He hurled another invective at Joe, and seemed about to dash at him in spite of the danger that menaced him.

"If you move a step I'll fire," cried Joe.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before Murdock sprang at him. Joe was a bit startled at the suddenness of the action, and as he pulled the trigger his aim was disarranged. The flash and report of the revolver almost in the scoundrel's face blinded him for the moment, and in swerving aside he pitched forward down the stairs. He went rolling and tumbling clear to the bottom, where he landed in a heap. Joe did not attempt to follow him, but dashed into the blazing room intent on putting out the fire and saving the house. The first thing he saw in the bright glare was the form of a girl, in night-gown, gagged and bound to the corner of the bed.

She was struggling and moaning in a desperate effort to escape the fate that threatened her. Joe was aghast at the sight. Pulling out his pocket-knife he tore the towel from her mouth and cut her free. She fell fainting into his arms. Placing her in a chair he began smothering the fire as well as he could.

The rascal had set the bed on fire. By rolling the burning clothes over one another Joe succeeded in putting it out after considerable effort.

By that time the girl had recovered her senses, and springing up watched him in a frightened way. When the burning clothes had been reduced to a smoldering, smoking mass, Joe threw up the window and pitched them out on the lawn. The danger over, he turned to the girl, whose lovely face was reflected in the mellow light of the lamp that stood on the dressing-case.

"You're safe, miss, and so is the house," he said.

"You're a brave boy," she replied, tremulously. "You have saved my life as well as the house. How can I ever thank you enough? Oh, I shudder

when I think of the horrible fate that man prepared for me. He must be arrested at once. I know him. His name is Mark Murdock, and he was connected with our show until this evening, when he was discharged with another man for good cause. There is a telephone in the library downstairs. Come, I will show it to you. You must call up the Dover police and tell them what has happened."

She seized Joe by the arm and drew him toward the door.

"Hold on, miss. There may be no need to do this. I met the rascal outside on the landing and shot at him. He tumbled down the stairs, so it's possible that I killed him. If I have, he deserves his fate."

He went back and got the lamp which he flashed down the flight, the girl peering over his shoulder. The light did not reach far enough, so Joe started down, holding the lamp above his head. When he was able to see the foot of the flight there was no sign of a man's body there.

Joe continued on down, throwing the light over the bannisters and along the landing on the second floor. Murdock was nowhere to be seen.

"I must have missed him, and he has escaped in spite of the nasty tumble he got," thought Joe.

While the boy felt relieved that he had not killed Murdock, he was disappointed to find that the scoundrel had got away. He went all the way down to the first floor, but the man was not in evidence. The girl followed Joe down when she saw him go on, and understood that the canvas-man had not been killed as she had at first supposed from the boy's statement.

"He has escaped?" she said, laying her hand on Joe's arm, and seeming not at all embarrassed because she was barefooted and attired in her night clothes.

"He seems to have made off, miss. You are Miss Newton, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am Jessie Newton. And you are——"

"Joe Melville."

"Neither myself nor my father will ever forget what we owe you, Joe Melville."

"That's all right. I am glad I was on hand to save you and the house. Now, where is the telephone?"

"This way. Follow me and I will show you," she said.

Opening a door at the end of the hall on the side opposing the dining-room, she entered, and Joe followed. She took the lamp from Joe's hand and placed it on a desk which stood beside the window. The telephone was beside the desk. Joe looked up the police station-house call in the telephone directory and then called on "Central" to be connected with that place.

In a couple of minutes he was telling the story of what had happened over the wire to the police. He was informed that officers would be sent out to Mr. Newton's house at once. While he was thus employed Jessie Newton slipped upstairs and dressed herself. She was accustomed to attiring herself quickly, and was back in the library by the time he had finished and was hanging up the receiver.

"You belong to Dover, I suppose?" said the girl.

"No, Miss Newton. I only arrived in this vicinity this evening. I have been tramping it for

several weeks looking for work, but luck has been against me."

"Indeed?" she said, in some surprise.

"I hope to be more successful in Dover."

"How would you like to go out with our show?"

"Very much indeed if I could be of any use."

"My father will find a place for you, and he will also reward you handsomely for saving my life and the house."

"I don't want any reward for saving you, Miss Newton. It was my duty to do what I did. If he will give me a position with the circus I'll be satisfied. I would like to become what you might call a young Barnum."

"You shall have a steady job all the year around with the show, and as you look smart there is no reason why you shouldn't work your way up to an important post on the executive staff. You shall have my personal help, and my father's backing, and maybe some day you'll become father's business manager," she said with an encouraging smile. "Some day you may get to be a young Barnum."

At that moment there was a rattle of a key in the front door, and William Newton entered the house.

## CHAPTER VII.—Joe Joins the Circus.

"There's my father," cried Jessie, jumping up.

She ran into the hall to find her father bringing in the two frightened and shivering domestics he had met cowering by the roadside, and from whose faltering lips he had learned that the house had been entered by burglars. They explained that they had been awakened by Jessie's screams, and when they ran down to see what was the matter, they saw a strange man at her door who they declared had made a grab at them.

They flew down to the second floor when they met another man, they said, who also attempted to stop them. They rushed down the rest of the way in the greatest terror and fled from the house to the road, not knowing what to do. The circus proprietor was naturally much excited by the statements of the terrified women, and hurried to the house with them as fast as he could.

"Jessie!" cried Mr. Newton, greatly relieved on beholding his daughter, whom he had been nervous about.

"Father, come into the library."

"Is it true that the house was entered to-night by burglars?" he asked.

"Yes. And only for a young man named Joe Melville who is in the library, it would have been burnt down and I would have perished in the flames."

"Good gracious, my child!" exclaimed her startled father.

Jessie brought him into the library and introduced Joe to him.

"Thank him, father, for he saved my life to-night."

"I thank you, young man, for whatever service you have rendered my daughter this night, and you shall be well recompensed," said Mr. Newton.

"I don't want any recompense, sir. Your

daughter has promised me a job with the circus, and if you will give me a chance to make myself useful it is all I ask."

"I will see what I can do for you. Now let me know about this burglary. Has anything been stolen? My goodness! I had quite a sum of money in my bureau drawer that I brought home with me to-night. I must go up and see whether it has been taken?"

He rushed up to his room on the second floor, followed by Joe and his daughter. He found the door open, the lamp burning, and saw the bag of plunder that Joe made Hurley yield up. Looking around the room he noticed that everything of value was missing, but he surmised that his property was in the bag.

It was a great satisfaction for him to know that the burglars had not carried it away. The bureau drawer that contained his money was rifled, however, and he had little doubt but that was gone. Fortunately it was only \$300. Joe told how he had entered the house after the burglars, whom he knew were inside when he heard Miss Newton's screams, and had first encountered the two servants, who evidently took him for a burglar and fled downstairs. Then he discovered one of the rascals coming out of the room with the bag of plunder on his shoulder. He told how he compelled the fellow to leave it behind him.

Then he went on to tell how he went upstairs and encountered the other rascal, and had a run-in with him, which he described.

"I suppose the bullet hit him and caused him to tumble down the stairs, but I had no time to consider the matter, or follow him, as the room he had just left was on fire, and I saw that only by prompt action could the house be saved from destruction. Imagine my consternation when, on entering, I saw your daughter tied to one of the bedposts and gagged with a towel. The rascal, to be revenged on you, had left her in this terrible situation to perish with the house," said Joe.

"What!" cried Mr. Newton, aghast. "My daughter left bound and gagged in her room and the place set on fire!"

"Yes, father," replied Jessie, "and you will never guess who the man was who was guilty of such a terrible deed."

"Do you know him? Who was he?"

"One of the canvasmen you discharged this afternoon—Mark Murdock."

"You don't mean it!"

"I do, for I recognized him, and Joe Melville also identified him."

"That's right," said Joe; "the man was Murdock."

"The police must be notified at once," said Mr. Newton.

"I have notified them over your telephone, and some officers will be here in a short time."

"Good. Go on with your story."

"There is little more to be told except that I cut your daughter free and put out the blazing bedclothes. I threw the charred remains out of the window."

"Well young man, I am everlastingly grateful to you for your priceless service to my daughter. Now tell me how you came to be near the house

to-night. It was most providential that you were in the vicinity."

"Well, sir, to explain that I will have to tell you all that happened to me from the time I struck the outskirts of Dover at the spot where the circus buildings stand," said Joe.

Accordingly Joe told all the facts that the reader is acquainted with, and by doing so was compelled to bring Dan Hurley into the lime-light.

"What, was that man in this outrage on my home, too?" cried the circus man.

"He was, but I don't believe he was an overwilling accomplice. At any rate, he had no hand in the attack on your daughter, and I am sure he wasn't aware of his companion's actions upstairs. I heard him refuse to have anything to do with any scheme in which your daughter figured. And he said that anybody who would harm Miss Newton ought to be tarred and feathered."

"Well, he was implicated in the burglary, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he was the chap who was carrying this bag of property off when I held him up with the revolver and made him drop it," said Joe.

"He's just as guilty as Murdock, so far as the burglary is concerned. I'll see that he's arrested and put through with his companion."

"He deserves to be punished, but it's hard on his wife."

"Yes, poor soul," put in Jessie, sympathetically. At that point the bell rang.

"That's the police, I guess," said Joe.

Jessie ran down and found three officers at the door. She brought them upstairs to her father's room. They looked around, saw the abandoned bag of plunder, and noted that the room gave plenty of evidence of having been despoiled. Mr. Newton told them that two discharged employees of his were the men guilty of the burglary, and also charged Murdock with setting fire to the house and attempting the life of his daughter.

Joe told all that occurred in the house, as far as he was aware of, and Jessie told how Murdock had entered her room, dragged her from the bed, bound and gagged her, and after telling her how he was going to revenge himself on her father through her, set fire to the bedclothes and left her to her fate. One of the officers communicated with the station-house, and then the bunch left to scour the neighborhood for Hurley and Murdock.

After the officers had taken their departure, Joe was offered the hospitality of the Newton home, and he accepted it, pending his engagement with the circus. After breakfast next morning Mr. Newton took him into his library and had a talk with him.

"I ratify my daughter's promise to you of a steady job with my show, with prospective advancement. As my executive roster is full, I can't give you any regular position at the start, but your name will go on the pay-roll as an all-around assistant, and your services will be used as needed until you shall have been provided with some regular line of duty. Get your hat now and we will drive into town. I will introduce you to

the general manager, and direct him to place you to the best advantage."

An hour later Joe was a regularly enrolled member of the Great American Circus and Menagerie.

"That gypsy was right after all. My luck has changed for the better," thought Joe. "Will the rest of her prophecy come true—that I was to strike the current which would bear me on to fortune? That seems too good to be true. And yet with Mr. Newton's backing, and the friendship of his daughter, may I not hope to rise in life and become pretty well off?"

Joe believed that all his troubles were over now, and that henceforth everything would run smoothly with him, but that's where he made a mistake.

## CHAPTER VIII.—On the Road.

Joe found his services were in constant requisition that day. Everybody was busy putting the finishing touches on the arrangements for the departure of the show from Dover that night after the opening performance, which Mr. Newton always favored his townspeople with. It was, as Hurley had remarked, a sort of dress rehearsal of the different acts which the performers had been rehearsing for ten days or more in the ring at the main building of the winter quarters. There was no preliminary parade of the performers and attractions.

During the morning the artists went through their last private rehearsals, and in the afternoon Jessie Newton was put through her act by the equestrian director. She was not a part of the show as yet, and no one had any idea when she would make her debut. Joe witnessed a part of her act and was then sent off to the lot to help the canvasmen put up the big "top," as the main tent is called. Everybody connected with the circus knew about what had happened at the "main guy's" house the night before, and the part Joe had taken in the affair. As Jessie was a great favorite with performers and employees alike, the fact that Joe had saved her life made him quite a popular personage. Several of the performers spoke to him in a friendly way after he had been pointed out to them, and the general working force admitted him at once on a par with themselves, dispensing with the customary "sizing up" process.

All hands were fed in one of the buildings of the permanent quarters, but that was the last day they would eat there. On the road they would be provided for in the eating tent. The Great American Circus and Menagerie was comparatively a small show when compared with the up-to-date three-ring circus. It only had one ring, and consequently the main tent could only hold an audience about one-third the size of the big shows.

Its route was mapped out in accordance with its limitations, and it never was seen in a city of the first class. It avoided contact with the routes of the three-ring shows as a rule, for it couldn't compete with them, though Newton had the reputation of carrying good performers and almost as good a menagerie as any circus on the

road. Newton had followed certain routes for years, along which he had built up a name for himself. He was regarded as the Barnum of the Middle West and South, and always did a good business. This year he was billed to open his season at Louisville, after which he would tour Kentucky and Tennessee, and so on southward. The show traveled chiefly by rail, but frequently extended its route to points off the railroad, re-connecting with its special train of flat and sleeping cars at some point many miles further along the line, or perhaps on a different road.

On these occasions all hands had to rough it to some extent, though every comfort was furnished them that could be carried along. The life of the circus man of to-day is a continual round of ease and luxury as compared with the strenuous, haphazard existence of his predecessor of a few decades ago. While helping to put up the main tent at the lot, Joe tried to learn whether Murdock and Hurley had been captured by the police. No one appeared to have any information on the subject, which was a pretty good indication that the two rascals had not been caught. Joe wondered if each had made off in a different direction, and whether they would come together again. The fact that Murdock was the only one who had secured any booty would be a temptation to Hurley to rejoin his pal if he could. That evening Joe was employed in the ring as uniformed attendant, and he saw the circus from a new point of view. The lights, the blaring music, and the large and enthusiastic crowd, sent a thrill of excitement through his blood.

Jessie Newton, in skirts and spangles, rode in the grand march, but that was all she did. Joe felt very proud when she stopped him outside the women's dressing-room and engaged him in a short conversation. If he thought her pretty before, he considered her a picture of loveliness now in her ring costume. Soon after the performance commenced, the menagerie tent was taken down and the cages on wheels, closed for the night, were drawn down to the railroad yard. As fast as an act was finished in the ring the performers' paraphernalia was packed up and loaded on a wagon, ready for transportation. Joe found there was plenty for him to do, and he did it with a will. At the close of the regular show the concert began in the big tent as soon as the bulk of the audience had passed out.

The side-show orators received the outgoing throng with renewed clamorings. To take this last advantage and let no chance for profit escape, this tent had been kept open. While the concert band was fiddling away, and a vaudeville singer occupied the center of a small portable stage, Joe was busy helping to lug seats away, and tugging at ropes and stakes. As the last spectator passed out he was called on to assist in peeling off the side-walls of the big tent. Then the thin white cloth roof came tumbling from above, at the order "lower away," and shortly afterward, through the dark, deserted and silent streets of Dover, the last man and wagon made their way toward the railroad yard.

When Joe reached the railroad yard the blazing naphtha torches showed him a picturesque and animated spectacle. Orderly precision prevailed everywhere. The wagons were drawn on the flat-cars by horses and a block and tackle,

while a man guided the course of the vehicles by its pole. There was a "skid," or inclined plane, at the end of the first car, and an iron plate bridged the space between the other cars, making a continuous platform. Each wagon had its number and allotted place, and was placed to the best advantage for convenience of unloading, and for utilizing space. A wrongly packed vehicle would have caused endless confusion and delay. One long train, headed by Pullman sleepers, was sufficient to transport Newton's circus, and by the time it was ready for the powerful locomotive, Joe was taking a sandwich and a cup of coffee in the lunch-room of the first sleeper. This was a privilege extended only to the performers and executive staff, the workmen having their own eating place and sleeping quarters in the car behind, but Jessie Newton had taken Joe under her wing, and he was assigned a berth in the first coach.

Of course, all the rolling stock was the property of Mr. Newton, and this sleeper had been named for Jessie. All hands, except the watchmen who patrolled the cars, were wrapped in slumber when the engine finally coupled on for the long jump to Louisville, but as this was Saturday night, and there was nothing doing next day, they had plenty of time to make the journey at an easy gait. When Joe tumbled out of his bunk next morning, and went to the wash-room, he found the train rolling along at a fifteen-mile pace. The sun was shining from a clear sky, and the air was clear and bracing. Few of the performers were yet up, but most of the executive force were in the restaurant cafe eating breakfast. Joe joined them, but before he was through the artistes began trooping in, with appetites that threatened the car's larder. The boy was standing on the platform between the two cars, talking to the treasurer of the show, when Jessie and her father came along.

"Good-morning, Joe," she said, extending her hand to him, while Mr. Newton nodded at him in a friendly way.

"Good-morning, Miss Newton," replied Joe, his blood coursing quicker through his veins under the influence of the arch smile she favored him with.

"I shall look for you when I come back," she said pointedly, as she passed on.

"I'll be here," he replied.

"You did a big thing for yourself when you were so fortunate as to save Miss Newton's life," said the treasurer. "The main squeeze will see that you're taken care of, and so will the young lady herself."

"I'm not looking for special favors," replied Joe. "As long as I've got a chance to earn an honest living I'm quite satisfied."

"I'm glad to see that you're a level-headed fellow. Such a sentiment will make you well liked, in spite of the fact that everybody understands that you have a pull with the management."

"If I've a pull with the management I don't mean to take undue advantage of that fact," replied Joe independently.

"That's a manly way to look at it, Melville. Most persons would try to use it as a stepping stone to preferment, whether they were competent

or not. It's the fashion nowadays to get on by wire-pulling, if you can. The chap with the pull is the party who steps over the heads of his fellows."

"I'm ambitious to get on, I'll admit, but I believe the only sure way of doing that is through one's own ability. A pull is not always a permanent advantage, while real ability is bound to be recognized and appreciated," said Joe.

"That's right. You look smart to me. That's the kind of people Newton wants with his show. He's going to place you on the executive staff as soon as he can find a place for you, and you may be sure he'll push you ahead as fast as you deserve, for he's anxious to show his gratitude to you for saving his daughter's life. That girl is a wonder. There isn't the slightest necessity for her to work, but she's fascinated with the sawdust, and, what is more to the point, has real ability in the line she has taken up. She takes to equestrianism like a duck to water. Matthews, our equestrian director, says that when she comes out she'll be the sensation of the season, and Matthews ought to know what he's talking about."

"She's a mighty fine girl," said Joe.

"That's what she is. I can see she's taken a great shine to you, which is natural, considering the service you rendered her. If you play your cards well, my dear fellow, you may win her, and then some day, when her old man retires, you will step into his shoes as the main guy, and we'll all have to take our hats off to you," laughed the treasurer, whose name was Charley Darling.

Joe flushed up, for, to say the truth, Jessie Newton had already made a great impression on his susceptible young heart; but the idea of him aspiring to the hand of the only daughter of the circus proprietor seemed altogether too cheeky to be considered.

"This is a fine country, and prosperous looking, we're passing through," he said, with a view of drawing the conversation into a new channel.

"Yes. The farms are large and appear to be well looked after. It may surprise you to learn that I was raised on a farm myself."

"Is that so?"

"That's a fact. Farming never appealed to me, so I cut it out as soon as I could. It's a long way from the farm to the show business, but I covered it and I'm perfectly satisfied with present conditions. Where do you hail from?"

"Chicago, originally. My father was a contractor. When he died my mother went to live with her sister in a country town named Eastview, in central Indiana, taking me with her. I was small then. My aunt died in a year or two, leaving her property to my mother who, unfortunately, from my point of view, married again. My stepfather and I didn't pull well together. My mother died a year ago, leaving everything to her husband, and then he made things so unpleasant for me that I couldn't stand it, so I started out to make my own way in the world. This is the first decent piece of luck I've struck since I shook my home."

"It will be your own fault if it doesn't turn out the best thing that ever happened to you," said the treasurer.

At that moment Jessie Newton appeared on the platform, and she took possession of Joe at once, as though she looked upon him as her particular property, and the boy hadn't the least objection to being carried off by her through the sleeper to the observatory platform in front, which was her own particular stamping ground on the train. Here the two young people passed several hours together, getting better acquainted and more interested in each other.

## CHAPTER IX.—Joe's Thrilling Experience.

The long train rolled into the railroad yards at Louisville about noon, and the process of debarkation began at once. Many of the performers left the cars at once, but not for the lot. Some registered at a hotel, intending to take their meals there and remain all night, at their own expense, of course. Others strolled around town and dined at some convenient restaurant.

Joe insisted on getting busy with the working force, although Jessie said there was no need for him to do so, as the menagerie and the smaller tents would be pitched that afternoon, for Sunday is the circus man's day of rest and relaxation. The cages were all taken to the lot and the animals fed. The cook and meal tents were about the first put up, and dinner was ready by the time the big "top" was in position for hoisting next morning at sunrise. The reason why the tents, for which there were no immediate necessity were not pitched like the others, was for the reason that the danger of fire, or "blow down," was minimized in the one and rendered impossible in the other instance.

Joe ate at the lot with the workmen, though few of the performers or staff members put in appearance. After he had his dinner he went back to the cars to wait for Jessie, who had gone to a hotel with her father and the assistant manager. They had arranged to take a walk around the city together, and he was tickled to death to be favored with her company. When Joe reached the lot next morning preparations were already under way for the procession.

After breakfast he was called on to help burnish up the gilt work on the menagerie wagons, and otherwise make himself useful. In due time the procession started over the route picked out, but Joe did not go with it. Had he tagged along at a little distance behind the last menagerie wagon he would have been treated to a surprise, and incidentally would have been able to prevent a sensational happening that occurred later, fortunately, however, not on the general line of march where the crowds of onlookers lined the streets.

Joe was not called on to do anything while the parade was in progress, but he made himself useful voluntarily in various quarters, and his services were duly appreciated. Jessie was not in the parade, but put in the time practicing her act in the ring, under the eye of the equestrian director. When the distant sounds of music announced the return of the parade, Joe went down the road a little way to view it on its final lap, for it was a novelty to him as yet, since he had

seen but few circus parades during his life-time.

The band wagon first swung in sight, and the inspiring strains of music made his eyes glisten and stirred his young blood. By the side of the band wagon marched a crowd of boys, some of whom had accompanied the procession at a tireless pace over the entire route.

The animal cages were sandwiched through the procession. The tigers and "Rajah," the "untamed monarch of the primeval desert," looked bored, while the hyena yawned in a sleepy way. They looked anything but dangerous at that moment. Behind them came the gorgeously caparisoned riders, men and women in tights and spangles, and breastplates of shining "gold" and steel. Then followed the richly-decked camels, with riders from the great desert, and the two elephants swaying to and fro with monotonous tread, burdened with howdahs on their backs, in which posed a lady performer. The procession closed with two or three more animal wagons, the last of all containing two white polar bears. Joe noticed that these two animals were walking nervously around their cage. The crowd had thinned out at this point, the majority having made a rush for the lot to see the breaking up of the parade.

As events proved, this was extremely fortunate for the people as well as for the management of the circus. As the last wagon passed on its way, Joe fell in behind. The cage contained two particularly ugly polar bears. A sharp-pointed steel bar, used by the menagerie attendants to control unruly animals, had fallen from one of the forward vehicles and lay in the road. Joe, recognizing it as circus property, picked it up and threw it across his shoulder. At that moment something happened to the bear cage. Crash went the wagon on its side. The heavy barred door, loosened from its fastenings by the shock, slid back, and out leaped the two savage white bears. At that critical moment Joe, with the steel bar uplifted, dashed forward. For a moment the polar bears seemed dazed by their unexpected liberty. Joe took advantage of their indecision, as the spectators, with cries of alarm, started to fly in all directions from the scene and brought the end of the rod down on the head of the nearest bear. As he rolled over from the shock Joe poked him with all his might in the mouth. That seemed to settle bear No. 1 for the time being, and without losing a moment the plucky boy attacked the second one. This one, however, showed fight, and turned his attention to Joe as an enemy to be dealt with before seeking fresh fields and pastures new. The driver of the wagon had been pitched from his seat, but fortunately alighted on his feet. The two horses had become frightened over the crash of the wagon—possibly their instincts told them the bears were loose—and they made a dash forward, breaking the traces and dragging the driver after them. At that moment there was excitement to burn at the scene of the accident, which rapidly spread all along the line, and the circus people soon became aware that something out of the usual was happening. Inquiries made of people in the badly demoralized crowd, now in a regular panic, gave the circus men an idea of what had happened, and there was a quick rounding up of the menagerie attendants, and a rush was made for the place

where Joe Melville, with the iron bar, was having the time of his life trying to control the actions of the second polar bear.

The other bear was reviving, and showed every indication of proving dangerous in a few minutes.

Joe had no expert knowledge of how to handle escaped animals, and was simply using his best judgment to hold the beasts to the spot till the circus people reached the scene. He knew that if the animals got away, there was no telling what damage they might not do.

Lives might be sacrificed before the bears were recaptured, and Mr. Newton would have to face heavy damage suits that might take all the profits of the season to satisfy.

Aside from these facts, Joe's own life was in grave peril. The second bear thought of nothing else but getting at him, and Joe was led a pretty dance around and around the wagon to avoid his claws. With the other bear on the job, too, his chances of escape would be very small.

Such was the condition of things when the circus attendants came on the scene. And they arrived not a moment too soon to save Joe. In trying to avoid bear No. 1, who seemed to recognize the boy as the one who had temporarily knocked him out, Joe slipped and fell. Before he could get up, bear No. 2 caught him by the leg and dug his claws into his calf.

"My gracious, I'm done for!" cried the brave boy, as the steel bar slipped from his grasp.

At that fateful moment half a dozen of the menagerie men dashed up and attacked the bears in a way that speedily cowed them into subjection.

The shock and pain of his wound, on top of the excitement of his encounter, was too much for Joe, and he fainted. More circus employees arrived. While a cordon was formed around the subdued bears, two canvasmen lifted Joe and bore him toward the lot.

By that time the assistant manager had heard about the occurrence, and the exciting news flew quickly among the executive staff and the performers.

Mr. Newton was not present, as he was transacting some business in the city. The manager and his assistant started for the scene post haste.

On the road they met the canvasmen bringing Joe along between them. The boy's face was white, and there was considerable blood on his torn pants. The manager recognized Joe at once, and asked what had happened to him. One of the canvasmen said that he had been attacked by the bears while trying to prevent their escape.

"Take him into the dressing-room and send for a doctor at once," said the assistant manager, starting on.

When the men carried the unconscious boy into the big tent they encountered a bunch of the male performers standing outside the entrance to their dressing-room. They were discussing the meager particulars of the accident that had reached them, and wondering how serious it was likely to turn out. The appearance of the badly used-up Joe created not a little excitement in their ranks, and they wanted to know how he came to be mixed up in the affair.

The canvasmen told what they knew as they

bore Joe into the dressing room, and then one hurried away to find a doctor.

The news of Joe's condition and the cause of it quickly spread to the women's dressing-room, where Jessie had just finished getting into her ordinary attire. The moment she heard that the boy was lying in an unconscious condition in the other dressing-room she uttered an exclamation and rushed around there to see what had happened to him.

When Joe came to his senses he found his head in Jessie's lap, and the girl in quite an agitated state over his condition, although one of the performers who had examined Joe's wound, and looked him over, had assured her that the boy was not seriously hurt.

"Oh, Joe, how were you injured?" she asked when he opened his eyes.

"Is that you, Miss Newton?" Joe replied. "Where am I?"

"In the dressing-room. You were brought in here a few minutes ago. How do you feel?" she said, with an anxious look.

"Oh, I guess there's nothing the matter with me except the pain in my leg where one of those bears laid hold of me," he replied, making an effort to sit up.

One of the performers had by this time bathed and bound his wound up with some kind of healing preparation he had in his trunk, and Joe began to feel like himself again, although his limb felt stiff and sore. He told the story of the accident that had happened to the vehicle, and how he had engrossed the attention of the bears till help came.

"You are certainly the bravest boy I ever met," said Jessie, looking at him with admiring eyes. "You have done the show a big service, and my father won't forget it."

"It seems strange that the door of the cage should come open as it did," remarked a performer. "Somebody is likely to get into trouble over it."

It also looked odd that both wheels should have come off the wagon, for every vehicle was carefully examined before the parade started. These facts were being looked into by the assistant manager at that moment, and he wasn't at all satisfied with the results of his examination.

The lock of the bears' cage showed evidence of having been tampered with, and that was a very serious matter. It was also his opinion that the nuts on the wheels had been loosened. The presumption was that somebody in the employ of the circus was guilty of a piece of dastardly work, and he determined to make a searching investigation.

The wagon was righted, the wheels replaced, and the bears returned to their cage, after which the vehicle was drawn to its position in the menagerie tent. The assistant manager questioned every one of the people connected with the animal department, but failed to get any light on the subject. The driver of the wagon was also interrogated. He admitted that he had seen two rough-looking men close to the wagon during a halt the procession had made, and had driven them away after some trouble. Further question-

ing drew one or two admissions from him that convinced the assistant manager that the two unknown men were responsible for the trouble. The driver was immediately discharged on the ground that his carelessness figured largely in the affair.

When Mr. Newton reached the lot he received a full report of the occurrence, and was not a little upset by it. He visited Joe, who was reclining on a bunch of straw, in company with Jessie, in the space between the dressing-rooms and the opening into the ring. The boy had just finished his dinner, which had been brought to him. The big tent was already nearly full of spectators who had come to the afternoon show, and the performers were preparing for the grand entry.

He listened to Joe's story from his own lips, complimented him warmly on the part he played in the accident, and assured him that he had rendered the show a very important service, which he would remember to the boy's advantage. Joe did nothing for a week after that, during which he was almost constantly in Jessie's company, and then he declared he was fit for duty again. He was given a position on the executive staff, and began to pick up the business side of circus life at a rapid rate.

## CHAPTER X.—Joe Makes a Disagreeable Discovery.

During the next three months the Great American Circus and Menagerie proceeded on its way through the South, giving two performances daily, Sunday excepted, and meeting with good success. By this time Joe began to consider himself a full-fledged circus man. He was learning the ins and outs of the business rapidly, and was now acting as chief aid to the assistant manager. The boy aspired to becoming a circus owner, and the idea of becoming a young Barnum pleased his fancy. Joe and Jessie had come to consider themselves indispensable to one another, and Joe had accumulated nerve enough to ask the fair girl to become his wife some day, and she had answered that she would. As the days went by they were very happy in their young love, and Joe was now sanguine enough to believe that the gypsy's prophecy was coming out true. The only thing that marred Jessie's happiness was the fact that she had not yet made her appearance before the public.

She was perfect in her act, but a succession of untoward circumstances prevented her debut. The new bills advertising her act, with a picture of herself turning a somersault over a banner, while her horse was going at full speed, were already in the hands of the bill posters ahead, but their display had been held up. The first disappointment she ran up against was her horse suddenly going lame. The cause of this proved a mystery to the skilled veterinary surgeon attached to the show. It was two weeks before the animal rounded into shape. That threw the fair girl out of practice, for she wouldn't use any other horse, and another week was lost by her in recovering her form.

Then she met with an accident herself—she slipped off the resined back of her steed one morning and hurt her leg, laying herself up. The groom who led the horse away called the equestrian director's attention to the presence of some oily spots on the resin, which explained the cause of the accident. How the oil had got there was another mystery that some crooked work was going on in the show. He was too busy to watch himself, so he deputed that task to a couple of the attaches, but they made no discoveries. Jessie's leg got well and she resumed practice again. The moment she did Joe put a special guard on all her movements. Everything was proceeding finely once more, and arrangements were under way to bill her act when she met with another accident.

While making a somersault over a banner held by two grooms she caught her foot in the folds of the banner, due to a clumsy movement on the part of one of the grooms, and she was pitched head first toward the edge of the ring. As luck would have it Joe had stepped in that morning to see her rehearse, and he was sitting on a seat behind the groom in question. With a cry of consternation he sprang up, threw out his hands and she landed in his arms, the boy going down in a heap with her.

His presence had saved her from a serious if not fatal injury, but she was so badly shaken up and unnerved that she couldn't go on with her rehearsal. The equestrian director gave the groom a sharp calling down, which the man took quite meekly, and then slunk away. Joe, however, had his suspicions, and shadowed the groom at intervals during the next two days. On the second day, during the hour between supper and the evening performance, he came unexpectedly on the man talking to a companion behind one of the menagerie wagons. Drawing back, he listened to what they said.

"No use talkin', Dan, I suspect that young Melville has his eye on us. He was right behind me when I tripped the gal up, and since then I've seen him watchin' me pretty sharply. If we stay any longer we're liable to be spotted, and then we'll go to jail and be taken back and tried for that job in Dover," said the man Joe suspected, and his words enlightened the boy at once concerning his real identity.

This fellow was Mark Murdock in disguise, and his companion was undoubtedly Dan Hurley. They had been with the circus a month, and none of their old associates, the canvasmen, had recognized them. It was something of a shock to Joe to find these two rascals connected with the show, and their presence seemed to throw a flood of light on the cause of the accidents that had happened to Jessie and her horse. However, now that he had identified them, the boy determined to have them both in jail that night.

"I agree with you, Mark; we'd better apply for our money and drop out," said Hurley. "We've done damage enough to Newton and his daughter to pay up for our discharge. I'm satisfied, and I think you ought to be."

"Oh, you're satisfied, eh? It seems to me you've been satisfied at every stage of the game. You're as weak as a rope of sand. Only for me I don't know where you'd been by this time. In jail as a vagrant, I guess."

"If I hadn't gone into that Dover job I wouldn't have had to leave home," said Hurley, in a sulky way. "Now I can't go back without bein' arrested and sent to prison."

"Why did you go in with me? I didn't make you. If I'd thought you were such a squealer I wouldn't have had you for anythin'. You've been willin' enough to help me spend what I did get out of the job, even if it was a failure."

"You agreed not to harm Jessie Newton; but you didn't keep your word with me. You tried to burn her up with the house. You'd have succeeded, too, if that young chap hadn't escaped from the well, and reached the house in time to queer the job."

"Yes, blame him, he did, and I mean to get square with him for it," gritted the rascal.

"What's the use of botherin' with him? He only did the right thing in savin' the girl."

"Don't you know he tried to shoot me, and was the cause of my tumblin' downstairs and nearly breakin' my neck? If luck had not been with me he'd have put me out of business. Then he spoiled that job we worked on the polar bears' wagon. If them bears had got loose over town Newton would have had a fine bill of damages to pay."

"Well, I'm glad he was on hand the other mornin' when you tripped the girl off her hoss. She was plugin' straight for the side of the ring, and might have been killed if he hadn't caught her. I wouldn't have taken no hand in it if I thought she'd have fallen that way."

"You'll take a hand in anythin' I say, Dan Hurley," said Murdock, in a threatening tone. "You know me, and I'd as soon slit your wizen throat as I did my old wo——"

"We'll leave the show tonight," went on Murdock, after a short pause; "but before we go we must finish things up."

"What do mean by that?"

"Just what I say. I'll tell you later on, and if you try to back out I'll fix you, and do the best I can without your help," said Murdock, glaring fiercely at his companion.

"I'll do anything you say if you'll let me go off on my own hook after tonight," said Hurley.

"That's a bargain. You can go. I shan't want you after tonight."

"Do you mean that?" asked Hurley, in an eager way.

"I do. I'll be glad to be rid of you."

"We'd better get away from here. The people are comin' in to see the animals, and we'll soon be wanted in the ring," said Hurley.

"Come on, then," answered Murdock.

Joe, seeing they were about to make a move, slipped off and hurried out to find Mr. Newton or the assistant manager, and report the discovery he had made.

## CHAPTER XI.—Misfortune to Burn.

Mr. Newton listened to Joe's story in great astonishment.

"Do you mean to say those two rascals are now with this show in disguise?" he asked,

"They are. I have recognized them beyond a doubt."

"And you say they are cause of the accidents that have interfered with Jessie's debut?"

"Yes. I know they are. And they were responsible for that trouble which happened to the polar bears' wagon in Louisville."

"The infernal scoundrels. I'll have them arrested at once. Where are they now?"

"In the neighborhood of the dressing rooms, waiting to take their places in the grand entree," replied Joe.

"Come and point them out to me."

"Better telephone to the police station for officers to take charge of them first. Murdock is a desperate rascal, and you don't want to take any chances of him getting away. Hurley is merely his tool, and will be easily captured."

"Very well. I will do as you say. I will see that Murdock gets all that's coming to him."

Thus speaking, the owner of the show hurried away to telephone for extra policemen. Joe went back to the dressing-rooms, and calling up a couple of grooms he knew he could trust, he directed them to keep an eye on the disguised Murdock and Hurley, without assigning any reason for the espionage. In a short time the evening show was on. By the time the grand entree was under way the menagerie was deserted, and the work of removing the cages to the cars was begun. The two elephants would be the last to go, as they figured in the first regular act in the ring. As soon as the grand entree was over, and the ring clear, the lumbering elephants were marched in, and with them went their trainer, a clown, and the equestrian director. The act was half through when the policemen arrived and reported. Mr. Newton and Joe started at their head for the dressing-rooms. Joe stepped into the big tent first and looked around.

The space where the performers waited for their music cue to enter the ring was now occupied by a richly caparisoned horse held by a groom, while the dashing equestrian who was to ride him as soon as the elephant act was finished was standing nearby talking with two female trapeze artistes, who followed him on the bill. A couple of attaches were moving about, but there was no sign of Murdock or Hurley, nor the grooms Joe had set to watch them. He started to look around for them. He judged that they couldn't be far off, for their services would be needed in the equestrian act. To save time it would be necessary to nab them before they went on, and fill their places with two performers. He glanced out through the curtain and saw that the elephant performance was nearly over. At that moment from behind the dressing-room flap the two rascals appeared, and behind them followed the grooms in a careless way. Joe motioned to one of the grooms. The man came over to him.

"Go to the door and tell Mr. Newton, whom you will find there, to come in," said Joe.

The groom obeyed. Murdock and Hurley started to pick up certain articles they were to bring into the ring after the bareback rider had made his entry to a flourish of trumpets. While they were thus employed Mr. Newton and the policemen entered. Joe stepped up to the proprietor and pointed the rascals out.

"Arrest those two men," said Mr. Newton to the officers.

Murdock and Hurley turned around and saw the policemen almost at their elbows. Then seeing Mr. Newton and Joe looking at them, they knew they were up against it. Hurley gave a gasp of consternation and offered no resistance as an officer placed his hand on his arm and said. "You're my prisoner."

Murdock, however, was not so easy. Though unaware that their identity was no longer a secret, he realized that their arrest meant the end of their disguise.

"What's the meanin' of this?" he cried, stepping back, and running his right hand to his hip pocket.

"It means that I have discovered who you are, Mark Murdock, and the law will now deal with you," replied Mr. Newton, sternly.

"Say you so? But I shall not go to prison without my revenge," cried the scoundrel with an imprecation.

He whisked out a revolver and fired point blank at the circus man. As Mr. Newton staggered back and fell into Joe's arms, Murdock fired at the nearest officer, killing him instantly, and then under cover of the confusion that ensued he dashed toward the door and escaped into the night. The policeman who had hold of Hurley took the precaution of handcuffing him at once, while the other officer bent over their dead comrade.

"I'm shot, and I'm afraid fatally," murmured Mr. Newton, as Joe and the rider bore him into the men's dressing-room, and a groom was sent out into the ring to ask the services of some doctor in the audience. Jessie had just finished dressing after the grand entree, in which she took part, when the two shots startled the occupants of both dressing-rooms. The news soon circulated that Mr. Newton had been shot by an employee. Frantic with anxiety the girl rushed into the other dressing-room, when told her father had been carried in there.

"Oh, father, father, are you badly hurt?" she asked him, as Joe sympathetically made room for her.

But the circus owner was unconscious and could not answer her tearful appeal. At that moment a groom appeared leading a physician. The doctor examined the showman's wound and looked very grave.

"He must be removed to the hospital with the least possible delay," he said. "My automobile is outside. If you will have him carefully carried to it I will drive him there in a short time. One of you will go along to support him on the seat."

"I'll go," said Joe.

"Let me go, too," begged Jessie.

When the doctor learned that the girl was the wounded man's daughter, he said she might ride on the front seat with him. There was some excitement in the audience, but the equestrian director calmed it by telling the spectators that one of the circus people had been wounded by the accidental discharge of a revolver. In the meantime Hurley and the dead policeman were loaded on the patrol wagon and carried away. Shortly afterward Mr. Newton was borne out of the lot toward the hospital. On his arrival there he

was carried at once to the operating table and examined. The wound was probed and the ball extracted, after which he was removed to a private room. His temperature was very high, and the surgeons would not say what his chances of recovery were. They admitted, however, that his condition was critical. That was all that Joe could learn and it wasn't encouraging.

He did not have the heart to tell Jessie the truth, and so, on the way back to the show with the doctor, who had left his wife in the audience, he told her that the surgeons hoped to pull him through. Jessie was silent and sorrowful, clung to Joe as the only friend she could look to for comfort in this unexpected affliction. And he did the best he could to cheer her up, assuring her of his unalterable devotion. Two-thirds of the performance was over when they got back to the lot. Joe thanked and suitably recompensed the physician, and then conducted Jessie to the women's dressing-room, where the female performers proceeded to sympathize with her. The act next to the last, a funny one, participated in by two clowns, with a trained monkey, was on, when Joe left the dressing-rooms for the front of the big tent. Nothing was standing now but the big "top" and the side-show—everything else had been removed to the railroad yard. Suddenly Joe saw a flicker of light in the darkness just under the canvas side where the audience was seated in tiers all around the ring, almost. Instantly it struck him that somebody had been surreptitiously smoking in the tent, which was against strictest regulations, and had dropped his lighted butt to the ground.

Knowing that even a cigar butt might start a fire among the inflammable seats if there were papers or straw there, and there was always a current of air along the ground even on a calm night to fan the glow into a blaze, he dashed hurriedly forward to stamp the peril out. He had hardly taken a step before he saw a tiny blaze shoot up. His heart jumped into his mouth and he increased his pace. The blaze spread rapidly and reflected the kneeling form of a man. The fellow, whoever he was, rose and started to flee, just as Joe reached the spot. The boy recognized him at once as Mark Murdock. With a cry of anger he seized the scoundrel and tripped him up on the ground.

"You rascal, what have you done? This time you shan't escape."

In another moment they were locked in a deadly struggle and rolled to and fro on the ground, first one and then the other on top. The rising glare of the fire illuminated their struggling forms. Joe, after a desperate effort, tore Murdock's hand from his throat, and then with all the power of his lungs he shouted the circus man's war-cry, "Hey, Rube!" Murdock, who was well aware of its significance, and that it would soon bring help from many quarters, tried to choke him off, but failed. Then striking Joe a terrible blow in the face, he sprang on his feet and dashed off into the darkness, just as several canvasmen came dashing up.

At that moment, as Joe staggered to his feet, the alarming cry of "Fire!" rose from the lips of a spectator, who had just smelled smoke, and, looking down, saw the flames beneath his seat. He jumped up and made for the passage around

the ring. Other spectators in the vicinity saw the smoke and started like a flock of sheep. Then a whole section of spectators rose in a panic, and presently a surging mob was fighting its way toward the main entrance like a swollen mountain torrent. The flames had caught on the sun-dried canvas, and ran up the side of the tent like wildfire. The sight of the spreading blaze completed the rout of the audience. Screams, cries, imprecations, and all the terrified shouts of a frenzied multitude, now beyond control, filled the night air. The clowns and the equestrian director, aided by other performers, made an attempt to bring order out of chaos, but they were swept off their feet by the mob that dashed across the ring to reach the other side. It was with the utmost difficulty that the clowns chased their donkey into the dressing-room section. The assistant manager, aided by Joe and all hands, tried to stem the fire by tearing away the canvas sides, but the flames had by this time reached the paraffine-coated roof, and the big top was doomed.

Some of the men were sent to pull down the side-show, which stood close to the main entrance. This was speedily accomplished, and the freaks were hustled out of the danger zone. The crush to get out at the main entrance was terrible, and Joe sent men to tear all the sides away and guide the people out at every possible point. The big "top" was soon blazing like a huge bonfire above the heads of half the spectators, aided by the night breeze. Joe saw that the only salvation for the rest of the crowd was to cut away the ropes at the end where the people were surging, and then pull the center pole over toward the dressing-rooms and let the burning mass drop there and burn out.

The assistant manager took part in this ticklish job, and it was carried out with success, but that gentleman, unfortunately, was struck on the head by the pole a glancing blow that put him out of business, and the management of everything fell on Joe's shoulders. After the fall of the tent the circus men were ordered into the area by Joe to pick up and carry out the dozens of women who had fainted and lay about in all directions. The blaze had called the fire engines to the spot by this time, and the men took a hand in the good work. An hour later the fire was out, the people gone, or taken away, and the lot was dotted with flaming torches, while the employees, under Joe and the boss canvasman's direction, were taking down the wrecked and burned seats, and other woodwork, and rescuing the stakes, chains and ropes from the confused ground. The Great American Circus and Menagerie was out of business until a new big top, with its auxiliaries, could be procured, and the seating accommodation restored.

The season was scarcely half over, and consequently many dates would have to be passed up before the show could be started again. With Mr. Newton lying at death's door in the hospital, the acting manager also in the hospital badly hurt, and a comparatively inexperienced boy at the head of affairs, the outlook for the show was not particularly bright when the exhausted circus hands retired to their bunks that night after Joe had notified the railroad superintendent that

the circus train would lie in the yards till further notice.

## CHAPTER XII.—A Young Barnum.

The reader may well believe that Joe slept little that night. He realized the great responsibility that rested on his shoulders. The show must be saved somehow, and he was the only one left to do. Even if Mr. Newton died, as he was likely to do from present indications, Joe felt that it was up to him to look out for Jessie's interests. To replace the big "top" and the other property that had been destroyed would be a simple question of time and money; but that was the least serious part of the problem that faced him.

It was a dead certainty that every spectator who had been injured in any way whatever would look for recompense, and the show was sure to have to face enough damage suits to ruin Mr. Newton completely. Joe was no lawyer, but it struck him if Mr. Newton was able to transfer all his property to his daughter in the morning before a single suit had been brought against him, that the show would be rescued from the clutches of the law, and that would give the management time to settle subsequently on an honorable and equitable bases with those patrons who had really been injured through the catastrophe.

While he was by no means sure that such a course was legal, he determined to put it through first thing in the morning if it could be done. Joe was up soon after sunrise and was busy with his plans for the future. The first thing he did was to order the cook, eating and other small tents to the lot, and one of the executive staff, provided with money, was sent to the markets to buy the provisions necessary to feed all hands that day. The menagerie tent was also ordered to the lot, the cages to follow, as Joe felt that the animals would be better under canvas than on the cars; besides, they could be more easily fed and attended to.

When the performers woke up they were notified that breakfast was ready for them at the lot. Joe then took Jessie under his wing, and on the way to the lot explained his plans, which she at once applauded. After breakfast he called certain members of the executive staff before him and gave them instructions as to what they were to do that day. One of his orders was to have the debris of the fire cleared away, and the lot restored to its original condition as near as possible. He and Jessie then started for the hospital. On their arrival they learned that Mr. Newton was resting easily, but that his condition was very dangerous. Joe inquired if he would be able to sign an important legal document, and the house surgeon replied that he would not advise such a thing unless it was absolutely necessary.

"It certainly is under the circumstances," replied the boy.

The assistant manager was reported to be in a bad way, but with the chances in favor of his recovery. Leaving Jessie at the hospital, Joe started for the office of a prominent lawyer of the town. The boy stated the position in which

the show was placed by the chapter of hard luck that had happened to it the preceding night, and asked if Mr. Newton could under the circumstances legally transfer his property to his daughter, and whether that transfer would prevent the property of the circus from being subsequently attached by people bringing suits for damages for alleged injuries sustained in consequence of the fire. The lawyer said that from the fact that Mr. Newton was liable to die at any moment, it would be advisable for him to make the said transfer of his property to his daughter so that the show, being in her name, could go on without being hampered by the jurisdiction of a court in the event of his death.

As to whether the transfer would offset an attachment issued on behalf of a suit for damages would largely depend on the view that a judge might take of the motive of said transfer. If he thought it was executed for defeating the ends of justice he would probably hold that an attachment was valid and could be made. On the contrary, if he thought it had been executed in good faith, with the sole purpose of relieving the show of the embarrassment that the owner's death would occasion, thereby enabling it to continue in business, he would probably vacate any attachment so far as it applied to the show's property.

Joe said that it was solely for this reason that he wished the transfer prepared, and he laid before the lawyer a complete schedule of the property of the circus, and requested that a document be prepared transferring all right and title to Jessie Newton, Mr. Newton's legal heir. The lawyer promised to have the paper drawn up, and sent it to the hospital at the earliest possible moment by his chief clerk, who was also a notary public. Joe returned to the hospital and was told that Mr. Newton's condition was unchanged. He was permitted to see the circus man for a few minutes, and explained to him, without telling him anything about the fire, why it was considered necessary that, pending his stay at the hospital, and to prevent complications in the event that his wound proved fatal, he should transfer the show in its entirety to his daughter. Mr. Newton agreed that it was a wise precaution, and consented to the transfer, so when the lawyer's clerk arrived with the paper it was duly and legally executed. Jessie then appointed Joe her general manager, and authorized him to take full control of the show.

The first thing he did was to telephone the advance agent, briefly explaining that the show was at a temporary standstill owing to the destruction of the big "top" and its contents. Next he telegraphed the firm that had supplied Mr. Newton with tents to send on within the shortest period of time a new big "top" of the same dimensions as the old one. He then visited a contracting carpenter and took him to the lot. He there explained to him the seating capacity of the big tent, showed him the sectional seats that had been saved and their condition, and asked for a bid on the job of replacing the same.

The man promised to send it to him in a couple of hours. When he got it he compared it with two other bids secured under similar conditions by one of his staff, and finding his estimate the lowest, gave him the contract and ordered him to start on the job at once. Jessie

appeared at the lot before supper and reported that her father's condition was slightly improved, but his life was still in the balance. At supper Joe received a reply from the tent manufacturer which stated that he had on hand a second-hand "top" of the dimensions required, which he could warrant for the balance of the season at least. He stated the price, and that it was ready for immediate shipment. Joe ordered it send on to a certain town on their route.

"Jessie, things are coming around better than I thought. We shall only drop three dates. This accident will wipe out all your father's profits to date, the treasurer tells me, but from this time on I hope to pull out a good profit for the rest of the season. You'll have to remain here with your father, of course, but I will furnish you with daily reports of our business, and I expect you will rejoin us as soon as you can, for I want to bring you out as a special European attraction from the Oriental Cirque, Paris."

"If father should die I'm afraid I would not have the heart to make my debut this season, Joe, dear," she replied, laying her head on his shoulder and crying softly.

"Let us hope he may not die, sweetheart," he replied, putting his arm around her; "but if he should you will still have me."

All hands, save several watchmen to guard the menagerie and other tents, left the lot after supper and passed the evening as suited their fancy. Some went to the shows that were in town, but all were in bed by midnight. At dinner next day Joe announced that the show would resume its interrupted tour that night, and the performers greeted his short speech with acclamation. He occupied the post of honor at the table, and was recognized as the "main squeeze," as far as authority went. Everybody was satisfied that he and Jessie would marry before long, and that meant, even if Mr. Newton recovered, that ultimately he would practically own the circus. Such being the prospect, the performers looking for re-engagement for the next season, deemed it wise to take off their hats to him. They also had another object in being deferential to the new manager. Many of the performers were thriftless chaps, accustomed to spend their accumulated salary, after the close of the season, without thought of the future.

During the winter these men looked to the manager of their show to make them advances to carry them on to the opening of the next season. Mr. Newton never failed to honor these requests, and we believe all circus managers do likewise, for, except in isolated instances, these debts of honor are always liquidated with grateful appreciation. At any rate, the circus man considers it good policy to stand well with the head of the show, and Joe occupied that position.

### CHAPTER XIII.—An Old Head on Young Shoulders.

That afternoon Joe inserted an advertisement in the daily press of the town to the effect that all persons having a bona fide claim against the Great American Circus and Menagerie for in-

juries sustained in connection with the fire at the lot could submit the same to the lawyer who had drawn up the transfer paper, the boy having retained the legal gentleman to look after these claims and sift out the real ones from the fakes. When the show reached Greenwood, the town Joe had figured on reopening the circus, he found the big "top" waiting at the express office. The boss canvasman took charge of it and had it removed to the lot at once, where it was inspected and found to be in excellent shape. The show arrived at this place ahead of time, late in the afternoon of the day before the date it was billed, and all the tents were in position and supper served and eaten before the sun went down.

As there was nothing doing that evening, the circus men had another easy spell of it. Joe, however, had plenty to attend to. He had gone ahead of the show, reaching Greenwood about noon. He knew it was necessary to call on many municipal and county officers and office-holders, and he proceeded to do so without delay, in order to smooth out any possible difficulty that might stand in the way of the show. He distributed admission tickets with lavish freedom where they would do the most good, and as his smart gentlemanly manner produced a favorable impression, the result was promises of gratuitous favors and a reduced rate for permits. Next he looked after the policing of the grounds for the protection of the show and its patrons. He called on the chief of police and assured him of the honest motives of the Great American Circus and Menagerie, told him that no thieves or criminals were tolerated, promised that there should be no disorder or violence on the part of the circus people, and asked in return protection and co-operation.

The train rolled in with the show while Joe was interviewing the chief of the Greenwood police, and when after transacting a lot of other business he went to the lot, he found everything there and in fine shape. His anxiety lest the big "top" had failed to arrive, through some accident, was set at rest, and he sat down to supper with the performers and executive force with a good appetite. But he wasn't through work by any means; in fact, all hands had retired to repose before he felt that he could safely seek his bunk. Joe was now beginning to realize the great responsibility that rested on his young and comparatively inexperienced shoulders. Perplexities as thick as a swarm of gnats buzzed around his head, and he was expected to meet and settle each one satisfactorily.

"If my head isn't gray before I'm a month older it will be a wonder," he thought. "After what I've already been through these two days I wouldn't tackle this job again except for Jessie's sake. I'll do anything for her. I'm bound to make mistakes, and mistakes made by the general manager are pretty serious matters, I imagine. I'll have to do the best I can, and pick up the experience by degrees that I lack. It will certainly be a big feather in my cap if I carry this show through the rest of the season all right. Well, I'm going to do it, or break a leg."

Breakfast over next morning, active preparations were on foot for the parade, the first under Joe's management. As he watched the well-fed horses and ponies in shining harness and

waving plumes start off with their glittering vehicles, and heard the exhilarating strains of music from the band perched on its chariot, his heart beat high and his eye sparkled with subdued excitement. One of the staff led the line down to town and back, and as Joe gazed after the picturesque cavalcade he felt a thrill of exultation course through his veins as he realized that he was the boss of the show, and in spite of the arduous duties and responsibilities that met him on every side he would not at that moment have exchanged his position for the crown of a monarch. In the course of a couple of hours or so, during which Joe's mind and limbs were full of action, the parade returned to the lot.

All was in readiness for the afternoon performance, seats, stands, rings and trapezes in place, and every man at his post. The cages were dragged from the parade to the menagerie tent, the horses led to their canvas stalls, and the two elephants pushed the red and gilt vehicles into place. The side wall was dropped, the ropes set, and then everything was complete. Quite a crowd had followed the parade to the lot, and the trolley cars were bringing additions every few minutes. It was a glorious, sunshiny day, and the outlook for a record-breaking audience was good.

"It looks as if luck is about to give us a fine send-off today," said Treasurer Darling to Joe. "We haven't had such an afternoon mob this season."

"We need it," replied the young Barnum, gazing down on the sea of people who were crowding in front of the ticket-wagon.

The enclosure in front was jammed with men, women and children, eager to purchase the pasteboards that would admit them past the doorkeepers. Yet Joe, guided by the experience of his predecessor, did not yet give the signal to the ticket-sellers to begin. Business astuteness bade him delay, though the work of selling tickets would have been infinitely easier had he permitted it to go on when the crowd first gathered. Joe's idea was to direct the attention of the impatient waiters to the seductive attractions of the side-show, on the platform of which the experienced "barker" was proclaiming with fluency and skill, and oratorical effect, the wonders to be seen within, while huge pictorial banners added their weight to his discourse. Pictured by word and brush were the wild man from Borneo, the midget, the living skeleton, the knife thrower, the fortune teller, the fat giantess, the snake charmer and a Circassian beauty.

A small band thumped inside, and frequently, as an evidence of good faith, one of the freaks was called to the front for a moment's survey. In a short time the side-show was crowded. Then Joe gave the signal to begin the sale of tickets. In another moment the crowd became like a heavy sea after a gale. Men pushed and strained to get near the window, children cried as they dragged and jammed in the throng, while many women appeared on the verge of collapse. The uniformed employees strove in vain to maintain order. That was out of the question, for everybody was irrational, unreasonable and excited. Such was the crush that the red wagon would have been swept away had not its wheels been buried to the hubs to make it immovable. Joe

was a brisk and hustling personage at the main entrance.

He answered questions innumerable, settled all disputes about admission, gave orders, sent aides all over the lot with instructions, saw that the crowd got inside safely and without delay, wanted to get in, but they could not be accommodated, and, in fact, was in general active charge of the "door." It looked as if everybody in town was out to the lot that afternoon, and that nobody would be left for the night show. When the big "top" was jammed so that not another spectator could find even standing-room, Joe reluctantly ordered the sale of tickets stopped. There was still quite a bunch of people who wanted to get it, but they could not be accommodated. Joe relied on his side-show barker to gather in their dimes, for they would surely all be on hand for the evening performance. Now the band in the big tent blared away and the grand entree was on. Joe, for the first time since he snatched his hasty dinner, had a chance to breathe. He started back for the dressing-rooms. Instead of entering as he intended, something induced him to walk around the back of this addition to the main tent. Probably to see if his watchers on the outside were as wide awake as they were expected to be. Suddenly he saw a man, one of his employees, lying prone on the ground, with a gash on his head. Close by the tent wall had been slit up with a sharp knife.

"There's something crooked here," he muttered, in some excitement.

Leaving the unconscious man for the moment, he entered through the slit, and looked around. He was now in a corner of the menagerie tent. The enclosure was deserted save by the attendants, and they were gathered in a bunch at the opposite end talking. The nearest cage contained Rajah, the Numidian lion. He was lying at the back of his cage, but his head was up in an alert way, and his eyes were fastened on a strange man who was trying to wrench the lock open. With a cry of anger Joe precipitated himself on the stranger, and at the same time called to the attendants for help. Joe and the man went sprawling to the ground in a heap. They struggled together for a few moments, then the fellow's beard fell off and he lay revealed as Mark Murdock.

#### CHAPTER XIV.—Jessie Comes to the Aid of the Show.

"Ha, you scoundrel!" cried Joe. "At your tricks again, eh?"

"Take that!" a glittering knife flashed in his hand, aimed straight at the young Barnum's breast.

Quick as a flash Joe seized his wrist and turned the knife aside. Then the attendants piled onto the man and he was captured.

"Brady, run and bring in two of the town policemen. This is the man who set the big 'top' afire in Greenville," said Joe.

"Are you sure?" asked one of the employees.

"Positive. Don't you remember I caught him at it, but he got away from me?"

"Yes. What was he up to now?"

"Trying to break the lock on Rajah's cage and set the beast loose among the people."

"The scoundrel! He ought to be hanged."

"Aye, aye! Hang him! Hang him!" cried the other men, excitedly.

Only that Joe interfered it is not improbable that Murdock would have seen his finish in that tent. As it was, the furious circus men kicked and mauled him without mercy till Joe interposed his authority, and rescued the dazed and bleeding rascal. Then the policemen appeared and Joe gave Murdock into custody.

"Look out for him," he said. "He's a dangerous scoundrel. He's wanted on two charges of arson, and two of attempted murder. He shot the proprietor of this show in Greenville on Monday, and it isn't at all certain that will recover. He tried to burn Mr. Newton's daughter to death in Dover, the day before the show took the road. He's also wanted in Greenville for the murder of a policeman. I'll call at the police station later on. Tell the chief to communicate with the Greenville police and notify them of this man's capture. His name is Mark Murdock."

Murdock shot a murderous look at the young circus manager as he was dragged handcuffed away.

"If I ever get the chance I'll finish you," he hissed.

Joe called two of the employees and took them outside where the watcher lay stunned on the ground.

"Take him to the dressing-room and bring him to," he said.

After supper the women performers took to sewing and fancy work, and the men to gossip of the ring on the greensward at the back of the tents. For Joe there was no rest. There was the evening performance to look after, and many other things to do. First he went down to the police station to see about Mark Murdock. He learned that the Greenville police had notified the Greenwood authorities that they would send officers after the rascal, the two towns being in the same State extradition papers were not necessary. Then Joe went to a telegraph office and sent the following dispatch to Miss Jessie Newton, American Hotel, Greenville:

"Opened here this afternoon to a record crowd. People turned away. Look for a crush tonight. How is your father?  
JOE."

Later on Joe was handed this message, addressed to "Joe Melville, General Manager Great American Circus, Greenwood":

"No change in father, but doctors sanguine. Congratulations on brilliant opening. I long to be with you.  
JESSIE."

Business continued good for the next two weeks, during which time Mr. Newton passed through the crisis in safety, but was left in such bad shape that the doctor advised him to go to

Florida as soon as he was able to undertake the trip. Jessie notified Joe that she would accompany her father and stay with him. That meant she would not come out that season. Joe was sorry, for he had counted on her as an added attraction. Still, as he was doing a big business, it didn't matter much. The third week, however, luck began to change. A three-ring show had preceded them within reaching distance of the people he counted on, and a one-ring show was not attractive enough to pull the usual crowds. This was tough on the young Barnum, who was trying to make a record for himself.

The receipts of the third week barely paid expenses, and the only thing Joe could do was to explain matters to Jessie by letter, who in turn informed her father.

"I fear worse ahead," he wrote. "The route can't be changed, you know, and the B. & B. people are paralleling us for the next two weeks. I don't see what I can do to alter things. We are simply up against it. If I had you to bill as a wonderful new European attraction, I might pull the people in spite of the greatest show on earth, but as you are out of it I must take my medicine."

Two days later a dispatch was handed Joe as he was viewing a very slender afternoon crowd. It ran as follows:

"Father has consented to go to Jacksonville without me. Expect me in two days. Bill me at once for this day week. Four or five rehearsals ought to round me into form. I'm doing this for you more than for the show."

"JESSIE."

Joe was delighted. He immediately communicated with the advance agent, tipping him off to what he was expected to do with reference to Jessie, who was to be introduced as "Mlle. Celeste, from the Oriental Cirque, Paris, the Greatest Bareback Rider in the World," whose stunts were the marvel of Europe, and the "Sensation of the Age."

The special posters and other bills, advertising Jessie, were in the advertising car, which was kept two weeks ahead of the show. It would be necessary to employ a special gang of posters to go over about half the ground already covered by the regular posters in order to advertise the new attraction up to the point where the advertising car took up the work, which Joe notified the boss of the car to do at once. The said boss was directed to express back to a certain number of towns the necessary quantity of the special bills. The advance agent was already in the town where Jessie was to make her first appearance, and he lost no time in working the newspapers for her benefit, and from that point he began making her a special feature with the show.

Joe made it a point to be at the train to meet Miss Newton when she joined the outfit. She reached the town before breakfast, and received a loving greeting from the boy manager, who conducted her direct to the lot. She put in a couple of hours rehearsing in the ring under the direction of Mr. Matthews, her instructor, who was the equestrian director. She was through

by the time the parade returned. Although she had been out of practice for a month, she rapidly recovered her form, and Matthews said that four rehearsals ought to fix her up.

## CHAPTER XV.—A Thrilling Conclusion.

Business continued poor until the circus reached Waverly, where Jessie was to make her debut. Here the advance agent had done his work well, and the special bunch of bill-posters had nobly seconded his efforts, so that the inhabitants of the town, as well as the country around, were decidedly anxious to witness the wonderful bareback performance of "Mlle. Celeste, the European marvel." The result was a big afternoon for almost the first time in nearly three weeks. Jessie was put in about the middle of the bill, and when she appeared in her glittering spangled costume, followed by her trained mare, a very handsome black animal with a white star on her forehead, she was greeted with thunders of applause. Her act was in two parts, the first not being specially thrilling, consisting chiefly of an exhibition of expert horsemanship, and some posturing. As she was finishing the first part the inevitable clown sprang into the ring to exchange a few pleasantries with the equestrian director while Jessie and her horse were resting. The clown greeted the ringmaster in an exuberant way.

"How do you do, John," returned the latter, holding out his hand. "Pardon my gloves."

"Oh, I say, quit kidding me," replied the clown, whereupon the ringmaster cracked his whip at the legs of the funny man, who uttered "Ouch!" as if in pain, and danced around in a way that raised a roar of laughter from the spectators.

"Say, Mr. Matthews, did you hear about my brother going into a gunpowder shed with a lighted candle?" asked the clown.

"I should think that would have been the last thing he'd do," said the ringmaster.

"It was," replied the clown, in a pointed way, and more whip-cracking followed this sally, which amused the audience mightily.

Then the clown wanted to know how long the legs of a normally built man ought to be. The ringmaster expressed various opinions on the subject, but the clown declared that his figuring was all wrong.

"All wrong, eh? Perhaps you can give a more intelligent opinion, then?"

"I don't know, Mr. Matthews, I'm not a college graduate like yourself; but I should say that the legs of a normally built man ought to be long enough to reach from his hips to the ground."

The ringmaster made an indignant swipe at the clown's legs, and then ordered him to ask Mlle. Celeste if there was anything she wanted. The young lady shook her head, and that was the signal for the band to strike up, and the horse to get a gait on. Jessie sprang up, and then banners were brought out and she jumped over them singly and in pairs. Then she went through half a dozen paper-covered hoops, one after another. Banners came into play again and she

did a somersault over several in quick succession. Then for a finish a hurdle was placed in position, and an attendant mounted a tall stand opposite it with a covered hoop which he held up high. The girl came on at a good speed, her eyes blazing with excitement. As the horse took the hurdle she executed a somersault through the hoop, landing safely on the mare's back amid tremendous cheering. That ended the act and Jessie's successful debut.

She sprang from the horse, kissed her hands to the audience and tripped out of the ring, a groom following with the mare. The newspapers next morning praised up the act, and admitted that Mlle. Celeste, the new attraction secured by the Great American Circus and Menagerie was great, but by the time the good people of Waverly were reading the critique the show was already landed at the next town on its route. Joe took care that the newspaper men read what their brothers of the quill in Waverly put in print about Mlle. Celeste's first appearance with the show, and he secured good notices in the afternoon papers. The circus drew big houses at this town, too, much to Joe's satisfaction. The circus gradually widened its distance from the route of its business rival, and then had things all its own way again. After putting in a week to overflowing business at New Orleans, the show started northward on its last stretch, through Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri. The aggregation played to the capacity of the big "top" at every performance, and "Mlle. Celeste" was the bright particular star of the show.

Her feats on bareback were by this time heralded hundreds of miles ahead along the route, and thousands of people impatiently awaited the coming of the Great American Circus. Already an emissary of the B. & B. Greatest Show on Earth who had witnessed the girl's act, was hovering around for a chance to secure the young lady's name to a contract with that organization for next season. He was disappointed, of course. When he found out that "Mlle. Celeste" was really William Newton's daughter, he threw up the sponge, because he knew he couldn't lure her away from the show that bore her father's name, and which was supposed to be still his property. At length one morning the Great American Circus landed in Smithtown, a hustling burg nestling among the Arkansas mountains. Before noon the town was crowded, and the line of march of the parade was black with spectators. Then the rush for the lot began. For some weeks back Joe had introduced a new scheme to draw people into the side-show before the sale of tickets began. This was the appearance of the Numidian lion Rajah and his trainer on the platform where the barker held forth. Rajah had grown quite submissive to his master, and when brought on the platform was securely chained to a stout post. As a further precaution he was always doped beforehand, for Joe didn't propose to take any chances with the beast.

In that condition he was sleepy and apparently harmless, and his trainer was able to execute many attractive stunts with him. To the people, however, the Numidian monarch looked decidedly formidable. In order to keep the crowd from getting too close to the platform Joe had a strong railing built at a distance of three feet.

Those in front were satisfied that they were close enough, but those further off were not, and the crush and push became so great that the heavy railing was smashed and the people in advance forced against the edge of the platform. Joe, seeing what had happened, called a bunch of employees to force the people back, and he sprang on the platform to direct them, at the same time ordering the trainer to remove the lion. The man started to do so. In the crowd pushed against the platform was a man, his wife and a little boy. The child was dressed gaudily, and his father, to save him from injury, raised him in the air. The great green eyes of the lion rested on the child. In an instant, without warning, he sprang to his feet, thrust one of his paws out, and tore the child out of the arms of its father. Its claws had hooked into the child's dress. A confused cry of horror went up from the terror-stricken crowd, while the child's mother uttered a wild shriek and fainted in her husband's arms.

"Kill the brute! Shoot him!" cried a hundred male voices, and weapons flashed in the sunlight in the hands of a score of Arkansans.

Before a revolver could be fired the lion seized the child's dress in its mouth and retreated to a corner of the platform, thus making it a ticklish matter to shoot the animal without hitting its little victim. The trainer was staggered by the state of affairs, and so was Joe, but across the mind of the young Barnum flashed the thought of what a set-back the show would receive if the lion killed the child.

Seeing that the paralyzed trainer made no move, Joe, scorning the peril of the undertaking, sprang toward Rajah, seized the child and tried to tear him away from the ponderous jaws. The attempt was vain and the beast growled ominously. Men with drawn revolvers pushed their way with desperate earnestness to the front, intent on killing the lion at all hazards. Half a dozen mounted the platform, and then were held back by one of the most heroic exhibitions of nerve ever seen.

Joe thrust his arm down into Rajah's distended mouth, catching it behind the tongue. The jaws of the animal opened, then clamped down on his arm, sinking its teeth into the flesh. The young Barnum had grasped the child, tore it loose and threw it off the platform into the crowd, where it was caught and restored to its almost frantic parents. At that moment half a dozen menagerie men with crowbars and pointed sticks dashed on the platform, pried open the lion's jaws, releasing Joe, and then driving the Numidian monarch back into his cage.

For a moment Joe stood erect, the blood streaming from his lacerated flesh and torn garment, while thunderous cheers greeted his heroic action, then he staggered and would have fallen but for the sustaining arm of a big Arkansan, who pulled out a whisky flask and poured some of its contents down the brave boy's throat. That revived Joe, and he was assisted off the platform, and into the hands of a doctor, who attended to his wounds.

Jessie was terribly alarmed over her boy lover's accident, and was hardly in shape to go through her afternoon feats. Joe, however, as-

sured her that he was not seriously injured, and would be all right again after awhile. His arm pained him for many days, and he never forgot the risk he ran that memorable afternoon.

Two months later the circus disbanded and went into its winter quarters at Dover. Later on Mr. Newton returned home, but not the man he was, and he congratulated Joe on the splendid showing he had made with the Great American. Then Joe asked him for the hand of his daughter, and got it.

So the gypsy's prophecy came out true. Joe did strike the road of fortune at Dover, for not only did he prove himself a young Barnum, but by marrying Jessie Newton he struck it rich in the show business.

Next issue will contain "THE BROTHERHOOD OF GOLD; OR, A DARING WALL STREET GAME."

### NAVY SET TO AID LINDBERGH

The Naval Hydrographic Office will co-operate fully with Col. Charles A. Lindbergh if he decides to make a flight to Europe via Greenland and Iceland, but is inclined to advise against it.

The Hydrographic Office has been issuing since December monthly pilot charts of the upper air, based on "average" weather conditions. The hydrographic experts do not recommend flights further north than the Newfoundland-Iceland Great Circle route followed by pilots on the successful non-stop flights across the North Atlantic last summer.

It is pointed out by the Hydrographic officers that their monthly pilot charts do not indicate that a flight such as Col. Lindbergh has been considering is impossible, but they frankly regard it as hazardous.

There are two known landing fields in Iceland and one in Greenland. In 1924 the army round-the-world flight crossed the North Atlantic from Scotland to Labrador, encountering much fog and adverse winds. Two of the planes came through successfully, but the third was forced down. The Italian aviator, Locatelli, who was following the American army planes closely, likewise was forced down and lost for a time, but finally rescued by a naval vessel.

A representative of Col. Lindbergh has been advised by Capt. C. S. Kempff, Chief of the Hydrographic Office, that all hydrographic data will be available and everything in his office placed at the disposal of the Colonel if he undertakes a flight to Europe by the route now under consideration.



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# TRUTHFUL JAMES

or

## The Boy Who Would Not Drink

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

### CHAPTER XVIII—(Continued)

Everybody was under the impression that Jimmy would make frightful examples of Farmer Brown, George Williams and their companions.

Excitement ran high and threats were made to break Jimmy's head if he mentioned any of the guilty parties in his speech.

During the week Jimmy worked faithfully on his mother's farm, attending to everything that was necessary to be done.

Quite a number of enthusiastic temperance men and women called upon him every day with all sorts of advices, and he listened, but refused to promise to make any personalities, saying that it was not his intention to call any names, but that he would speak strongly to the point on the subject of drunkenness.

On the next Sunday the little church was packed to overflowing.

It was estimated that some two or three hundred residents of the township couldn't get inside, so they stood around and tried to catch some of Jimmy's words through the open doors and the windows.

Jimmy had taken pains to prepare himself for the occasion, and while he didn't call any names, as was expected, he touched so closely on certain incidents that had public notice that several parties thought themselves alluded to, and thought they had cause for complaint.

Judge Wilson, who presided and introduced Jimmy as the young man who could not be persuaded or forced to drink liquors, eulogized Jimmy's speech highly after he had finished, and characterized him as a young man who was ready to fight for his principles.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### How Jimmy Conquered His Most Dangerous Enemy.

Jimmy Watson's speech created considerable excitement and a fine impression in the community, and the temperance people were very much elated over his development into a good speaker. Coupled with that, George Williams' failure to keep his pledge made in open court added much to the excitement.

The Williams family was considered one of the best in the county, and George's fall showed plainly that he was going to the dogs as fast as a boy could. Some of Jimmy's friends tried to persuade him to go to George and make friends with

him, but he shook his head and said that he had always been his friend; in fact, was yet; but unfortunately George was angry with him and hated him, so he couldn't talk with him without getting into a fight, and the pastor of the church where he had made his speech said that he was right, and that he couldn't have any influence whatever with George.

George was driven from his home by his indignant father; but his mother stood by him, and said that he was her son, and that if he was bad she would not desert him.

She finally persuaded her husband to let him come home, and thus by degrees she thought to win him away from his evil companions; so George came back home, but his father prohibited him from bringing any liquors into the house. It was an easy matter, however, for him to get a drink whenever and wherever he wanted it, for barrooms were numerous in that part of the county.

Finally the women in the township began a crusade, with the ultimate object of voting whisky out of the community. It couldn't be voted out of the county unless each township in the county agreed to it, and Jimmy Watson's services were called for by temperance people from one end of the county to the other.

Jimmy told the committee which called on him that he could not devote his entire time to it unless some man took his place on the farm and did his work for him.

His mother's pastor was at the head of the committee, and he went to work and raised a fund to pay for the hire of an able-bodied man to work the widow's farm while Jimmy was working in the temperance cause; so a very able-bodied young man's services were secured, and he went to work at once.

George Williams sneered at Jimmy and taunted him with loafing around at the expense of his neighbors instead of working as he should do.

Jimmy, though, avoided him as much as possible; but sometimes they met, and more than once George challenged him to a fight.

"George," he said, "I've thrashed you two or three times already and that ought to satisfy you."

"Well, it doesn't satisfy me. Things were against me at the time."

"Well, they will be against you again," said Jimmy, "for I have not weakened myself by indulging in strong drink as you have. I could whip you now with one hand in my pocket."

That was an unfortunate expression which caused George to go all to pieces.

He sprang at Jimmy and tried to clutch his throat, but Jimmy clinched with him, and they had a regular rough-and-tumble fight which lasted until some parties separated them, and there was a great deal of comment about it, friends of both sides making charges.

In one of his speeches a week later Jimmy was called upon to explain certain charges which had been made by some of George's friends, so he made a statement that was verified by several witnesses; but one of George's friends in the crowd rose to his feet in the place and denounced his statement as false.

A storm of indignant protest was the result. Jimmy very coolly put the question to the audience as to whom they would believe.

"You!" the audience roared almost unanimously.

And great applause followed; but it practically broke up the meeting for that evening. The young man who had interrupted the meeting attempted to make an explanation, but the audience fairly howled him down. The young man exclaimed:

"I can prove that he has made a false statement."

An old farmer named Ragland retorted:

"Prove it and I'll contribute one thousand dollars to sustain the bar-room of this county."

The young man said he was not there defending the bar-rooms, as he was not a drinking man habitually, but was simply standing up for the truth.

That again created no little excitement, and Ragland came out with a public statement, saying that he stood ready to make his promise good; that he would put up his check endorsed by the bank, payable to the committee of the opposition as soon as the young man could prove that James Watson had made a false statement.

Interest was added to the fight by Jimmy's mother, who wrote a card saying she would back Jimmy's statement with her farm, which was worth all of fifteen thousand dollars.

Thus the fight grew more lively, and Truthful James' reputation became a topic of discussion all over the State. Everywhere people were talking about Truthful James, and everywhere young ladies were seen wearing white ribbons on which was printed the sentiment:

"I am for Truthful James. For whom are you?"

Thus Jimmy, the widow's son, found himself a topic for all the papers in the State and the most abused young man among the liquor people. People came from all parts of the county to places where it had been announced he was to speak.

One night a great crowd gathered at a country school-house half a mile from where Farmer Brown resided.

Brown himself was seated in the front row, and there were many present who expected trouble.

Jimmy looked the farmer straight in the face all through his speech. He was very careful to say nothing to arouse Brown's ire, for he knew that there were many friends of the farmer present in the room, and he knew that it would be unwise to provoke trouble.

When he finished his speech and started to sit down, Brown sprang up and rushed at him with his brawny hand extended toward him and exclaimed:

"Truthful James, give me your hand."

Jimmy sprang up, exclaiming:

"There it is," and the two clasped hands like two old friends.

"Jimmy," said Brown, "I want to say that I endorse everything you have said to-night. I knew your mother when she was a schoolgirl. I knew you when you were a child, and I never knew anything to your discredit in my life. You made me so ashamed of myself the last time I got drunk that I've sworn never to touch another drop of liquor as long as I live."

A storm of applause greeted that statement, and as the old school-house was crowded, some of the desks were actually smashed.

The opposition was astounded, for Farmer Brown had been one of their strongest partisans up to that evening. The old fellow explained that Jimmy's display of good, hard sense in his speech had convinced him that he was wrong, and that he would be as honest as Jimmy was, make a public confession as he did and join forces with him.

When Jimmy's mother heard the news she broke down and wept, and Sally Holmes went over the next morning and spent the day with her.

"Mrs. Watson," said Sally, "Mr. Brown is the last man in the State about whom I expected to hear such things."

## CHAPTER XX.

### Jimmy's Magnificent Speech in Court.

Farmer Brown's unexpected addition to the temperance forces created a decided sensation throughout the entire county, and great credit was given Jimmy Watson as the prime cause.

Judge Wilson declared that it was the most important event of the campaign.

The hard-headed farmer gave Jimmy the credit too, by saying that his fairness and honesty and truthfulness was the main cause of his change of mind.

George Williams attributed it in a humorous sense to some bad whisky which the farmer had partaken of, and George's father suggested to him that he follow Brown's example.

"What!" exclaimed George. "And go dry the rest of my life! Never! It is Sally Holmes who is keeping Jimmy up to the rack, and if I had a girl like her I would stick to cold water just as Jimmy does."

"Nonsense," said his father. "There are plenty of girls just as good as Sally in the county, although they may not all have as good, hard common sense as she has."

"Show me one," said George, and the old man proceeded to name some three or four girls living in the vicinity.

George, though, shook his head and said he had made love to two of them, but that they told him to get out.

The fact is, George was fast becoming a regular jailbird. He had been arrested and fined so often that it was nothing unusual now.

His mother managed always to raise enough money to pay his fine and get his release, for George, in his repentent moods, made all sorts of promises of good behavior, only to break them; but the mother never lost hope.

Finally George, in a drunken frenzy, assaulted a young friend, stabbed and came near killing him, and for several weeks the young man lay between life and death and under the care of one of the best physicians in the county.

Of course George was indicted, and it looked to all his friends that he was bound to go to the State prison for a term of years.

(To be continued)

# Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, JUNE 1, 1928

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## INTERESTING ARTICLES

### DAGGERS, NAILS AND KNIVES FAIL TO DRAW BLOOD AS DOCTORS WATCH

Hundreds of physicians gathered recently at headquarters of the Austrian Society for Psychic Research and watched in amazement as Paul Diebel, thirty-year-old Silesian miner, who has been showing himself elsewhere in Europe, had daggers, nails and knives thrust into his body without evincing indication of pain or producing a flow of blood.

The spectators included many women, some of whom leaned forward with opera glasses to catch a better view of the miner as he was pierced. Others fainted at the sight.

This was the first time a group of qualified scientific men had witnessed this astounding exhibition. They pronounced it genuine.

Diebel, the spectators asserted, thrust a dagger through his forearm so that the instrument protruded on the other side. He showed his arm around the room before he withdrew the dagger. Not once did he wince and he did not shed a drop of blood.

The miner next "by concentration of will power" caused drops of blood to trickle through the wall of his stomach, following the expulsion of blood from the knee.

His most dramatic act was to make a large cross in blood appear on his back, the blood being forced to the surface apparently by uncanny exercise of will power.

Diebel concluded his exhibition by allowing one of the spectators to shoot a large metal bolt into his chest by means of a catapult. He then calmly withdrew the missile with no show of pain and permitted physicians to examine the bloodless wound produced.

### MAN WITH \$20,000 HELD AS VAGRANT

Patrolman William O'Connor of the Old Slip Station, recently, out of sheer pity took Charles Marino, a sandwich man, who has been a landmark for many years in the district between City

Hall and Wall Street, east of Broadway, to the station house and booked him on a charge of vagrancy. The policeman was astounded to learn that Marino had been found to be possessed of savings bank books showing deposits of more than \$20,000 and considerable accumulated interest and that he had \$286 hidden in his clothing when he was picked up.

O'Connor arraigned Marino before Magistrate Corrigan on the vagrancy charge in Centre Street Police Court. The old sandwich man was a pitiable sight. His clothing was in rags and he wore no underwear. Magistrate Corrigan suggested sending Marino to Bellevue.

The human scarecrow protested in language and with logic which showed education and intelligence. He protested that he had been earning an honest living and that his personal habits are his own affair.

The Magistrate committed him to the Tombs and directed Probation Officer Herold to make an investigation. It was found that Marino had been living for years in a room at New Chambers and Madison Streets for which he pays \$5 a month. He complained to the police last summer that he had been robbed of \$3,700 cash in an east side Turkish bath and the probation officer reported that he hasn't taken a bath since. The bank books revealed that he has at least \$7,500 in the Emigrant Savings Bank and made his last deposit there ten years ago.

So he was back on the job recently carrying an advertising sign up and down Nassau Street, but it is doubtful, in view of what has developed, that patrolman of the Old Slip and Oak Street Precincts will slip him any more dimes and quarters when they meet him prowling around nights in inclement weather.

### WOULDN'T THIS SLAY YOU?

Embryo Sheik (on phone). You want to go with another couple? All right. You get another girl and I'll get another good looking fellow.—Grinnell Malteaser.

### AND THE NIGHTS ARE SIX MONTHS LONG

Eskimo 1: Let's quit playing bridge and go to bed.

Eskimo 2: Oh, no, let's have one more blubber.—Pomona Sagehen.

### ANOTHER LOST

"How are ya, Bubson?" greeted the brothers, as the prospective pledge strolled into the frat house.

"Great, lads," Bubson responded. "Say, if a guy finally decides to go your way, he doesn't have to live in this dive, does he?"—Brown Jug.

### IT WON'T BE LONG

Something went wrong with the elevator. The control was lost and down it went full speed toward the bottom. An old lady who didn't understand said: "Boy, you didn't stop at the floor I wanted you to. What are you going to do about it?" "Have no fear," replied the elevator boy, "this thing'll bounce right back."—Pennsylvania Punch Bowl.

# Job, The Signalman's Son

By Col Ralph Fenton

"One o'clock," said Job Clinker to himself. "Young Job'll be here directly and I shan't be sorry, neither. This cold weather does make one a bit hungry."

Job Clinker—or old Job as he was generally called, to distinguish him from his son, who was known as young Job—was a signalman on a Pennsylvania railway; a right good, steady fellow he was, too. Perhaps not very clever, but a man to be trusted, as the company soon found out; and so he had been gradually promoted from the platform, where he had once been a humble porter, to the more important duties of the signal-box.

He had not long to wait on this particular day, for one o'clock had scarcely passed before a cheery voice was heard outside calling to be let in, or the beefsteak pudding would be quite cold.

"And it's a rare good one, too, father," said young Job, with sparkling eyes. "Mother put a kidney in, and some onions—and what d'ye think?—a couple of larks as the squire's son shot and give to me; and such a crust! Oh, my!"

And young Job—who was a rosy-cheeked, apple faced boy, with curly black hair and eyes brimming over with fun—gave a dance on the floor, intended to express the thickness and the superb quality of the said crust.

"Mind, lad," said Mr. Clinker, apprehensive as to the loss of any gravy, "I'd better take care o' that myself. It's nice an' hot, that's one comfort."

"Ah, isn't it? I run all the way, an' over the snow it wasn't very easy, neither. But, I say, you ain't very warm, though."

"I shall be all right when I've eaten a bit," replied the man, with his mouth full of pudding. "That there stove makes a bit of a smell, you know, and it it wasn't as the thummometer was down a long way below freezing point, I'd sooner be without it."

"Ah, I wouldn't," replied young Job reflectively.

The boy hadn't long to stop, for he was employed in the village, and had run up with the pudding during his dinner hour; so, after chatting a few more minutes, he turned to go.

"Hallo!" said he, suddenly stopping on the threshold of the door. "I'd almost forgotten. Look here, dad. Here's a paper, and a 'lustrated one, too, full of pictures, as Mr. Simmons, the bookseller, give me for you."

"Thank ye, lad. I shall have three clear hours this afternoon, and a spell won't hurt me. There's the express at five and the mineral at 4:30—only that blessed 4:30 is always late. Anyway, I shall have plenty of time to read."

And so the boy dashed off, half running and half sliding over the frozen snow at a smart pace.

People blessed with a good digestion often feel a slight chilliness after eating, and this was the case with Job. After sitting a while he got up, stamped two or three times to warm his numbed

feet, and finally heaped some more charcoal on the fire.

"That looks better," he muttered. "Now for a good quiet spell at the paper. I ain't much of a scholar, but give me time and I'll read as well as most of my mates."

And after looking at the pictures he turned to the letter-press and was soon absorbed in what he was reading.

The afternoon sped on and tea-time approached. Young Job set out about a quarter to five to take his father's tea to the signal-box. It was quite dark, but young Job knew every step of the way; besides, which the faint light of the moon and the reflection from the snow helped him on a little.

The air was very still and not a sound could be heard—not even his own footsteps. It had been blowing hard in the morning, but the wind had died away to a dead calm, and the least noise traveled much farther than it otherwise would have done.

All at once young Job pricked up his ears as the sound of a distant whistle broke upon them.

"Why, that's the coal train!" he muttered. "Ain't she late? It must be quite five minutes to five."

He was about five hundred yards from the signal-box, and by the time he had diminished this distance to half he could hear the puffing of the engine quite plainly.

He glanced at the signals and suddenly stopped. "Well, now, that's a funny start," he murmured, rubbing his eyes. "Why, they both mark 'clear'."

The two signals were some distance apart, and owing to the position of the line which led to the colliery, were facing each other, so that any one midway between the two, as young Job was, could not fail to see them both.

The puffing and snorting of the engine became more distinct every instant; and as it had to cross over the line on which the express traveled, the boy knew that unless the latter was very late indeed, the two trains would arrive at the same point about the same time. How, then, was it that either one or the other of the signals did not mark "danger" by having a red light?

Young Job thought for a moment, and then a sudden fear came over him. He trembled violently, and his knees knocked together from fright. What if anything had happened to his father? That there was something wrong he was sure, for he knew enough of the working of the signals to be certain that both lights ought not to be white, when two trains were approaching.

He was about two hundred yards from the signal-box, but short as this distance was, he knew that he had not a moment to loose, for he could now see the head light of the coal train engine shining like a great star and growing larger and larger.

He set off running as fast as he could. Fear lent him wings, and had he been pursued by wolves he could not have exerted himself more than he did.

Nearer and nearer came the coal train, and still the signals remained unchanged. It had but a quarter of a mile to go and then it would be upon the metals over which the express ran.

At last young Job reached the door of the

signal-box, and with his heart thumping against his breast, raised the latch. Despite his anxiety and hurry, he could not help pausing for an instant, for all within was as silent as the grave, and the dead stillness smote upon his heart like a knell.

Then he summoned all his courage and burst open the door. What a sight met his eyes! The lamp burning dully, the hut filled with a suffocating odor, and his father, leaning back in his chair, his head hanging heavily on his right shoulder, and with a face a pale dusky hue.

"Father!" screamed young Job wildly; but the figure in the chair never moved, nor showed the least sign of life.

The poor boy was so overcome with grief and fear that for a moment he stood as if paralyzed. At that very instant a long, shrill whistle sounded sharply through the silent air. He knew it too well, and it recalled to him his shattered sense.

It was the whistle of the express train!

The terror of the situation—for he knew well enough that unless one or the other of the trains was warned a number of souls would, within the next five minutes, he hurried into eternity—sharpened every faculty. The hoarse puffing of the coal engine had never ceased, and the loud rumble told him that it could not be more than three hundred yards from the junction.

Love on the one hand urged him to run to his father; but on the other he felt that the safety of hundreds were trembling in the balance. He glanced at the handles which communicated with the signal lights and hesitated no longer. In a second he had sprung across the room and seized the first one which came to hand.

It was quite a chance which he seized, and yet everything depended upon his choice, for the express, travelling as it did at the rate of fifty miles an hour, could not possibly stop in time; the coal train, on the contrary, could be pulled up within a very short distance.

Scarcely a minute must have passed while he held the handle; but his suspense was so terrible it seemed to him at least an hour. He held his breath as the noise of the approaching express came nearer and nearer. A deafening roar, and young Job almost fell on his knees with joy. The express had passed and the danger was over.

Then came the reaction. In the excitement he had after the first impression, scarcely noticed the peculiar, suffocating air of the apartment. But now a dryness in the throat and a smarting in the eyes told him that something was wrong. He guessed at once the cause. It was the charcoal stove.

Fortunately he had left the door open, and the room was much purer than when he entered; but to rush to his father and drag him into the open air was the work of but a few moments. Grasping a handful of snow he rubbed it on the forehead, the mouth, and the neck of the senseless man, and trembling with anxiety awaited the result. It all depended on how long his father had been exposed to the charcoal fumes.

He bent over the motionless figure and gazed earnestly in his face. His father was still alive! Joyfully the boy renewed his exertions, and at

last, after heaving a deep sigh, he opened his eyes.

"It's me, father: don't you know me?" almost screamed the lad.

"Where—where am I?" murmured old Job.

"Here; quite safe. The express has gone by—and it's all right—and I was just in time—and you're better now, ain't you?" said young Job.

"Yes, I'm better," said old Job slowly; "but what's up? I was reading that paper you brought me, and then I suppose I must ha' gone off in a faint or something."

A little examination soon solved the mystery. The stove-pipe, which conducted the fumes into the open air, had become disconnected and the carbonic acid gas, which is given off when charcoal is burned, instead of passing away had escaped into the apartment, and so had nearly suffocated the signalman.

Probably old Job had, in the first instance, dropped off to sleep and fallen against the pipe, for he had moved his chair close to the stove for warmth, and when young Job came to remember, his head was certainly but a few inches from the pipe. Luckily, the signalman had not been very long under the influence of the suffocating gas, for he distinctly recollected looking at his watch, and its marking half-past four.

But it was a very narrow escape; and when in years after old Job was promoted, he never thought of that evening but with mingled feelings of thankfulness and pride; thankfulness that he had been saved from a fearful death, and pride that his safety and that of possibly a hundred fellow creatures was due to the courage and presence of mind of his son.

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#### RAY'S OF MILKY WAY HAVE FORCE EQUIVALENT OF 41,000,000 VOLTS

Rays from the Milky Way with more than thirty times the penetrating power of X-rays and which have baffled science for more than twenty years since they were first suspected, are described by Professor Robert A. Millikan, of the University of California, in the current edition of "Nature."

Professor Millikan and his assistant, Dr. Cameron, searched the universe in an attempt to determine the source of these rays, which are called cosmic rays. They describe their latest experiments in California and on the heights of the Andes.

They tested the light from the stars without result. They found the sun had no effect in this direction, and they gathered nothing from their trials of interstellar space.

The resultant inference is that the rays came to the earth from the edge of the universe, far beyond the ring formed by the Milky Way, and had origin 1,000,000,000 light years ago.

The rays are believed to be electrical in origin, but to produce rays with the same penetrative power would require an electromotive force of 41,000,000 volts.

While a fairly thick coating of lead is impenetrable to X-rays, the cosmic rays can be detected behind a lead screen up to 16.7 feet thick and to a depth of 190 feet of water.

## BRIEF BUT POINTED

## WINDOW THERMOMETER HANDY

A thermometer is a sure and safe way to know just how cold it is outside of the home, and to have one fastened outside your window will save you a lot of discomfort. It will aid in keeping the temperature of the room even, because you do not have to open the window and stick out your head to find how cold it is.

## POOR ACTORS THOUGH SANE, VERDICT ON FOUR PRISONERS

A departure in the manner of simulating mental derangement was made in the Spandau police court when not only one, but four prisoners arraigned for theft attempted to play the role of madmen. The ruse might have worked, had it not been for the unique opinion given by the medical experts who pronounced the four defendants "perfectly normal individuals—but poor actors."

## FRENCH ARMY TO ABOLISH "K. P.'S," WOMEN TO DO ALL OF SCRUBBING

"Kitchen police" and all other domestic aspects of the military career are soon to be abolished in the French army, according to persons close to the War Office.

French soldiers will henceforth never stoop from warrior-like dignity to such tasks as peeling potatoes. All barracks will have automatic machines for cleaning and fixing vegetables. Cleaning and scrubbing will be taken out of the hands of soldiers and put into those of charwomen.

## SOVIET NOW PERMITS BOURGEOISIE TO RETAIN ALL OF SALARY EARNED

Soviet Russia is discovering within itself a new Red bourgeoisie—a class able to earn good money and to invest it. The government is to abolish some of its irksome rules to encourage this new class, consisting principally of engineers, managers of engineering shops and technical men.

It has decided that members of the bourgeoisie in the future shall have the right to retain their full salaries, instead of having to hand over all in excess of 255 rubles (approximately \$110) to Communist party funds, as laid down by Lenin.

This decision throws more light on inner evolution than volumes of official speeches. The days of militant Communism are gone, and so too are the days of scarcity, in the opinion of certain observers here.

## IDEAS PURELY CHEMICAL

Dr. Ralph Waldo Gerard, assistant professor of physiology at the University of Chicago, is engaged in experiments to show that thought is a mere chemical process. Dr. Gerard works with a thermopile, an apparatus so delicate it can detect one-millionth part of one-millionth of an ampere of electricity.

His theory is that all nerve stimulation results in chemical reactions, which produce heat. Minute electric shocks are used to stimulate artificially the nerve fibres, bringing about chemical reactions which in turn produce heat. The heat is converted into electricity and measured. Nerves

extracted from live frogs were used in the experiments.

Dr. Anton J. Carlson, Chairman of the Department of Physiology, said: "Dr. Gerard's work in the field of nerve physiology is an achievement comparable to that of Prof. A. A. Michelson in physics."

## INDIAN STRAPHANGERS GET SEATS BY LYING ACROSS RAILROAD LINE

A strange scene took place at Egmore station recently when a large party of delegates, which was returning home after attending the recent native Congress session, found that there were insufficient accommodations in the train and that two whole compartments were reserved for soldiers entraining at St. Thomas's Mount, some stations later on.

The Congress delegates forced themselves in the carriage and would not get out. So the railway authorities simply detached the reserved carriages. The passengers retaliated by lying across the lines, preventing the passage of the train. A deadlock continued for more than two hours, the passengers all lying on the railway lines during the period.

At the end of two hours the railway authorities yielded to the demand of the passengers, permitted them to occupy the reserved compartments added more carriages, necessary for the troops entraining at St. Thomas's Mount, and then the train steamed off amid rousing cheers from the Congress delegates.

## FOOT TRAVELER SAFER ON LEFT-HAND SIDE

Many collisions between automobiles and pedestrians would be avoided if pedestrians would all use the left side walking along the highways.

This conclusion has been reached by the Public Safety Department of the Automobile Club of Southern California and other organizations seeking to better traffic conditions.

While at present there is no law requiring the pedestrian to walk on the left side of the road, it is pointed out that this is far safer than walking on the right side, both for the pedestrian and the motorist.

Rights of pedestrians and motorists are equal on the open highway under the old common law. The pedestrian may walk in the middle of the highway if he so desires, as he has that right. However, since Southern California has nearly three-quarters of a million motor vehicles scooting up and down its highways, the pedestrian who would elect to walk in the middle of the road is taking the first step toward extermination, even though he has a perfect right to walk when and where he will.

It is believed that at the next session of the Legislature a law will be introduced making it compulsory for pedestrians to keep to the left side of the road, where they may at all times see all oncoming vehicles. While there may be some opposition to such a law, it is regarded as a natural step following the laws that have been made in cities for the protection of pedestrians.

## CURRENT NEWS

### DO NOT SHOOT AT PIGEONS

Numerous complaints have been made to the Pigeon Section of the Signal Corps that carrier pigeons of the racing homer type, being trained throughout the United States for communication service with the American Army, have been shot by persons on hunting expeditions.

In spite of the fact that many States have laws prohibiting the shooting of pigeons, the killing of these birds by hunters has interfered seriously with the training of homing and carrier pigeons for Army service. It is believed that the persons responsible for the death of these birds are unaware that they are hindering an important branch of war preparation.

Because of the important part carrier and homing pigeons are playing in the war, and the great need for their breeding and development in this country, the War Department has considerably expanded the Pigeon Section of the Signal Corps. Homing pigeons constitute one of the most effective means of communication in the Army, and are especially valuable as a sure method of replacing other means of communication. The breeding and training of pigeons, therefore, is of paramount necessity as a war measure.

Any pigeon in the air may be carrier pigeon flying from a lot under Government supervision. Its destruction may be a serious loss to the American Army. All persons, therefore, are urged to refrain from the shooting of pigeons and to discourage the practice of hunters and of children.

Persons coming into possession of pigeons labeled "U. S. A.—18," indicating that they are being trained for Army purposes, are requested to report the fact at once to the office of the Chief Signal Officer, Land Division, Washington, D. C.

### SWEDES, "PUREST NORDICS," SHOW GAIN IN STATURE

A very practical and literal rising of Nordics is announced in a publication of the Institute for Race Biology at Upsala. In it Professor Herman Lindborg, an expert of international authority in matters of race hygiene, has made a detailed and painstaking study of the characteristics of the Swedish race, the aim of his investigations being to provide bases for legislation intended to safeguard and preserve the purity and the best quantities of the Nordics. The scope of the work and of the scientific researches of its author comprises anthropology, biology, heredity and medicine. In the course of the investigations 47,387 persons, scattered through all parts of the kingdom, were scientifically photographed, measured, weighed and questioned concerning their birth, their ancestry and their vocations.

Foremost among the conclusions reached by these investigations is that Sweden, which claims to be the oldest independent state in Europe, is inhabited by a practically homogeneous race, which contains only the slightest admixture of foreign elements and may be regarded as perhaps the purest of all representatives of the Nordic

race. One of the most striking details disclosed is the fact that this Swedish race is steadily growing taller in physical stature.

It is known from records that in 1841 the average height of the twenty-one-year-old recruits called for army service was about 165 centimeters. The latest measurements show that the present height of the young man is 172.2 centimeters. Of course, the race remains blond. As to hair, 72.7 per cent are blond, 22.1 per cent, brown; 2 per cent, dark brown, and only two-tenths of one per cent, black. The eyes of 86.9 per cent are blue or gray, and the remainder, brown. The formation of skull, face and nose remains strikingly true to the Nordic type.

### "NO SPEED LIMIT" LAW APPROVED BY POLICE

Michigan's new traffic laws have been in effect several months, and results show that accidents have neither increased nor decreased because of the so-called "no speed limit" law.

Because of this new traffic law, congestion on the highways has been very materially decreased, time between cities has been lessened greatly, and traffic is moving considerably faster.

The parking laws, however, are such as the different cities choose to make them by ordinance. Each city may provide in its charter for the acquiring, establishment, operation, extension and maintenance of facilities for the storage and parking of automobiles within its corporate limits, including the fixing and collection of charges for service and use thereof on a public utility basis, and for such purpose to acquire by gift, purchase, condemnation or otherwise the land necessary for such parking facilities.

Michigan's speed laws are receiving no small amount of attention from officials of other States, as well as the motorists themselves. But the laws demand that persons driving a motor vehicle shall drive the same at a careful and prudent speed, not greater than nor less than is reasonable and proper, with due regard for the traffic, surface and width of the highway and of any other conditions that exist. The real "kick" is the one that permits a driver to "step on it" so long as the car is in control and can be stopped within an assured distance.

State troopers are enthusiastic over the way the new law has worked out, and report that arrests are made easier for them. Reckless driving provisions of the new law, they say, are so plainly set forth that officers have less trouble in court.

There is also a growing tendency toward greater courtesy on the part of truck drivers. Instances in this particular direction are numerous. When long stretches of clear highway are encountered speed is limited only by the desire, apparently of the driver, who confesses that he has a feeling of comfort of driving at what would formerly have been a law-breaking speed. Now the constant look-out for "bogey-man" otherwise the traffic officer astride his high-speed motorcycle, has been nearly eliminated.

# Fame and Fortune Weekly

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